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GABRIEL PREIL: AN AMERICAN HEBREW POET

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HORACE M. KALLEN: AN AMERICAN JEWISH PHILOSOPHER

Sarah Schmidt

ABORTION: A CHALLENGE TO HALAKHAH

Blu Greenberg

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JUDAISM, conceived as a free and non-partisan organ, is dedicated to the creative discussion and exposition of the religious, moral and philosophical concepts of Judaism and their relevance to the problems of modern society. Through an exploration of the meaning and needs of the Jewish experience, it hopes to widen the channels of communication between Jews and to affirm Jewish verity and vitality to the world at large.

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JUDAISM

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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

In increasing measure, modern men are turning again to the quest for a worldview on the issues that are timeless—the meaning of life, the challenge of death, the purpose of suffering, the significance of the individual, his relation to society, and the goal of history. In order to advance this enterprise of spiritual discovery of our time this Journal has been projected. It will be primarily concerned with the philosophy, ethics, and religion of Judaism as a factor in the contemporary world . . .

We are committed to the proposition that Judaism has positive value today for Jews and for the world . . . At the same time, we disassociate ourselves from the dangerous tendency toward the hardening of party lines on the contemporary Jewish scene . . . The members of the Board of Editors belong to every school of Jewish life or to none. The trends popularly referred to as Orthodox, Conservatism, Reform, Reconstructionism, as well as others that as yet have no specific names, have their advocates among us, though no institution or movement is officially represented . . . Undoubtedly, our differences will find expression in these pages, but we shall be at one in opposing the dogmatism which takes for granted that one's own particular standpoint has a monopoly on truth and the authoritarianism which would suppress any contrary point of view.

Judaism will be dedicated to the quest for truth in the spirit of freedom. Our columns will be open to anyone who has something significant to say and the ability to say it well. New and unconventional interpretations, whatever their standpoint, will be welcomed from every source, for we share the conviction of the Talmud that "Both these and the others are the words of the living God."—From the introductory article by Robert Gordis, "Toward a Renaissance of Judaism" in Vol. I, No. 1.

The First Reader

The Holocaust Through Christian Eyes

The Holocaust continues to remain the monstrous enigma of our age, profoundly disturbing to believers in God. Jews have frequently complained—and with good reason—that the problem has aroused little concern, let alone contrition, among Christians, both during the heyday of Nazism and in the decades that have followed.

Fortunately, there are great-souled Christians, endowed with sensitivity and moral courage, who are not prepared to sweep the Holocaust under the rug—until the next catastrophe comes, Heaven forbid. We are happy to present papers by three of our Christian brethren dealing with the Holocaust. They were written independently of one another, and deal with varied aspects of this moral disaster whose after-effects are still potent and, indeed, growing in virulence in our day. *Hans O. Tiefel's* paper, "Holocaust Interpretations and Religious Assumptions," presents an incisive analysis of various theological approaches to the Holocaust, both by Jews and by Christians. The author's moral earnestness and deep human compassion make the reading of his paper a moving experience.

A Christian college student, *Timothy Dwight Lincoln*, presents a sensitive and incisive analysis of "Two Philosophies of Jewish History After The Holocaust." In his paper, he examines the work of Richard Rubenstein and Eliezer Berkovits, who represent virtually the two extremes of the spectrum in evaluating the Holocaust and its implications for religion and life.

The third paper in this "mini-symposium" is entitled "A Visit to Majdanek," by *Frank S. Parker*. His very deep emotions at this blood-soaked site sets in bold relief the effort of Russian and Polish Communists to blot out the grisly fact that the vast majority of victims in the Nazi concentration camps were Jews.

The world's callousness toward Jewish blood is widespread. But as these papers, which are basically personal testaments, make clear, humanity and compassion are not extinct even today.

A New Look at the Seder

The Passover Seder is undoubtedly the most colorful, as it is the most beloved, family ritual in Judaism, with probably no rival in any other tradition. In his paper, "The Passover Seder: On Entering the Order of History," *Monford Harris* presents an interpretation of the Seder in psychological and philosophic terms that reveal new layers of

significance for the participating children and adults, as well as for the community, with which they identify themselves.

If the Editor may be permitted to editorialize, the paper stresses the ineluctable bond between the Jewish people and history. This emphasis is particularly welcome today when one frequently encounters the downgrading, if not the denigration, of history in theological circles.

But Is It Zionism?

The support of the vast majority of American Jews for the State of Israel remains vigorous and, indeed, becomes stronger, as it becomes clear that the attack upon Israel and Zionism in the U.N. represents a legalization of anti-Semitism, a goal that even Hitler never achieved.

Nevertheless, *Chaim Isaac Waxman* argues that the pro-Israel stance of American Jews does not mean that they are Zionists. He draws some important conclusions from the distinction between the two in his paper, "The Centrality of Israel in American Jewish Life: A Sociological Analysis."

Hebrew Poetry is Still Being Written in the United States

Two or three decades ago, a fairly large group of talented Hebrew poets were writing in America. The passing of time and the vicissitudes of change have left only one outstanding figure in this group, who is virtually a native-born American, *Gabriel Preil*. This gifted poet is the subject of a sensitive study and appreciation by *David Rudavsky* in his article, "Gabriel Preil: A Hebrew Poet in America."

We Need Creative Interpretation of Jewish Law

The issue of abortion in all its ramifications is one of the burning moral questions of our time. Writing from an Orthodox perspective, *Blu Greenberg* presents a sensitive and wide-ranging analysis of the conflicting values that complicate a decision on the morality of the act. She is deeply concerned with the important human considerations in favor of the practice and the apparent opposition to it in Halakhah. In her paper, "Abortion: A Challenge to Halakhah," she opts for a more liberal interpretation which would resolve the dilemma while retaining the authority of Jewish law.

The Editor would suggest that part of the difficulty which she and others of like mind encounter would be substantially reduced if one important historical fact were taken into consideration—the Halakhah is not monolithic or unchanging through time. The great classical sources

of Jewish law, the Mishnah and the Gemara, are basically "lenient" on the question. The more stringent opinions, which grow increasingly more rigorous, characterize the medieval and modern *poskim* (decisors).

This increasing severity of later rabbinic authorities constitutes a basic problem for Jews, both within Orthodoxy and without, who accept the authority of Jewish law and wish to live by it. What is, therefore, required is a return to the attitudes and insights of the great creative period in Jewish law, the Talmudic era, rather than to the very late authorities who frequently were insulated from the currents and concerns of their own age.

A Little Is Better Than Nothing.

The fear of "hypocrisy" frequently acts as a deterrent to people who otherwise might be disposed to change their accepted life-style. In his paper, "Honesty vs. Hypocrisy," *Reuven Bulha* examines the attitude toward hypocrisy in the rabbinic tradition, indicating both the contents and the limits of the traditional Jewish antagonism to hypocritical behavior. The concrete life situation with which his paper begins suggests drawing a distinction between inconsistency, or the failure to maintain an integrated structure of practice, and hypocrisy, which means acting in one way and pretending to act in another.

A Distinguished American Zionist

For virtually the entire twentieth century, Horace M. Kallen has been one of the most distinguished philosophers in America. Perhaps his greatest influence in American life, though it was often unacknowledged, was the doctrine of "cultural pluralism," which he elaborated at a time when the "melting-pot theory" dominated American thinking with regard to the various ethnic groups in the country.

In her paper, "Messianic Pragmatism: The Zionism of Horace M. Kallen," *Sarah Schmidt* points out that Kallen's deep Jewish concerns were intimately related to his concept of America. She traces his intellectual history, his early alienation from Judaism, his return to what he called "Hebraism," and his deep involvement in American Zionism during the crucial days of the First World War. The paper makes it clear that the "Pittsburgh Program," which served as a rallying point for Louis D. Brandeis and his Zionist associates, was the intellectual brainchild of Horace M. Kallen.

It may perhaps be pointed out that the State of Israel and the Zionist movement could well profit from a new infusion of "messianic pragmatism," the rebirth of the social idealism which gave Zionism so powerful a hold on the sympathies of millions of Jews and non-Jews.

Horace Kallen, who was an influential voice in the council of the American Jewish Congress, played a significant role in winning the support of Congress for the publication of a journal devoted to Jewish religion, philosophy and ethics which the Editor proposed nearly a quarter of a century ago. Dr. Kallen remained one of the most distinguished members of the Board of Contributing Editors of JUDAISM throughout his lifetime.

A Guideline for Ethical Responsibility

It is not to be expected that ancient books, even the Book of Books, should be applicable in all practical details to the problems of modern life. What may be found in the winged words of the Bible are insights, attitudes and goals that can illumine the path lying before us. In his paper, "Poverty and the State in Biblical Thought," *Jon D. Levenson* seeks to relate the ancient wisdom of the Biblical tradition to the modern efforts of ameliorating social injustice through the welfare state.

Are Jews "Ethnic"?

Words and concepts, like clothes, art and furniture, have their periods of popularity when they are "in style," or, to use the current term, when they are "in," followed by a time when they lose their appeal and are, presumably, "out." One such word, "ethnicity," has become a key term in discussions of American society and politics in general and American education in particular. The subject is discussed by *David Schnall* in his review-essay, "Ethnicity and American Society," based on books by Greeley and by Levey and Kramer.

R.G.

Holocaust Interpretations and Religious Assumptions

HANS O. TIEFEL

THE HOLOCAUST, OR THE DESTRUCTION OF European Jews under Hitler, was such an oppressively tragic event that its interpretations were slow in forming. Moreover, the interpretations have not merged into a consensus. The meanings given to this event—if one ascribes meanings at all—are diverse and reflect the strain of trying to look at the iridescent evil that is the Holocaust. The aims of this paper are to scrutinize some of the Jewish and Christian interpretations, to question some of their assumptions, and to offer several alternatives. Specifically, I shall first describe and evaluate four versions of speaking of the Holocaust in the context of theodicy. A second part considers several misleading assumptions in the Holocaust discussions, assumptions about the nature of faith, providence, and salvation. The third and last part offers some constructive proposals about the meaning of human and divine suffering and points to the importance of rethinking ethics in the light of the Holocaust.

My own presuppositions in the analysis of various interpretations of the Holocaust and in the proposed alternatives emerge out of the effort to think within a Christian and Biblical frame of reference. I assume that the urgent questions raised by the Holocaust are pressing, precisely because they are raised within the Biblical, the Hebraic-Christian tradition, and that the sort of answers that are needed must arise from within that tradition as well and should reflect and elucidate the Biblical covenant faith.

I. Four Interpretations of the Holocaust in the Context of Theodicy

Most interpretive writing about the Holocaust seems to proceed in the context of theodicy. The terrible suffering of European Jews throws doubt on the traditional understanding of the God who is not only loving and good but who is also Lord of history or whose presence has political, public, this-worldly significance, whose will shall be done on earth. The people of Israel had, indeed, suffered before, but earlier interpretations of suffering can simply not be applied. The Deuteronomist's interpretation of disaster as corrective punishment makes no sense to Jews who were not persecuted for a lapse of faith but precisely because they, their parents, or their grandparents kept the faith. And the

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Servant poems of Isaiah, which speak of voluntary suffering as effecting redemption and universal salvation, make little sense to a people who have no choice of repentance for being Jews, who are charged with committing a crime simply for being Jews, and whose suffering redeems neither them nor their persecutors.

A. Richard Rubenstein succinctly describes this dilemma between faith in a living God who seeks justice in history and the ultimately unjust events of the Holocaust: "How can Jews believe in an omnipotent, beneficent God after Auschwitz?"¹ Rubenstein denies that the Holocaust could be interpreted as punishment of sinful Israel or as the testing of Job. "To see any purpose in the death camps, the traditional believer is forced to regard the most demonic, antihuman explosion in all history as a meaningful expression of God's purposes."² Therefore, Rubenstein gives up the historical understanding of God and affirms, instead, a "Nothingness" which is the Lord of all creation.³

Rubenstein's "solution" lies beyond the boundary of Biblical faith. The alternatives for him seem to be to deny either the senselessness of these tragic historical events or to deny the reality of the historical God. He chooses to do the latter, yet he affirms the Jewish traditions.

To a Gentile, it is not always clear what it means to be a Jew. But the Christian acknowledges that his own conception of God as Lord of history grows out of Hebraic roots. To relinquish history as the sphere of God's action would, among other things, lead to an internalizing of faith, to limiting it to the inner man, and would imply the giving up of saving historical events such as the incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. Without the claim that God acted decisively in that history, the Christian would no longer have an identity, since who he is is defined in terms of that salvation-history. One suspects that, judging from the general rejection of Rubenstein's answer, the Jew is similarly bound and defined by other saving events. The God of history is all we have.

B. Another approach which will also merely be sketched here comes

1. Richard L. Rubenstein, *After Auschwitz: Radical Theology and Contemporary Judaism* (Indianapolis and New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1966), p. 153.

2. *Ibid.*

3. *Ibid.*, p. 154. Rubenstein made a similar statement in 1970: "... I would like to offer my own confession of faith after Auschwitz. I am a pagan. To be a pagan means to find once again one's roots as a child of Earth and to see one's own existence as wholly and totally an earthly existence" ("Some Perspectives on Religious Faith after Auschwitz," in *The German Church Struggle and the Holocaust*, eds. Franklin H. Littell and Hubert G. Locke [Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1974], p. 267). Yet Rubenstein does not conclude that such atheism excludes him from Judaism: "... paganism does not mean the rejection of one's people's ancestral dance, its distinctive rituals, nor its ancestral story" (*Ibid.*, pp. 267-268). It appears that the question of what it means to be a Jew is one of the many issues raised by the Holocaust.

from a Gentile writer, A. Roy Eckardt. His answer is not to give up the historical God but to claim that, in the Holocaust, God, as well as men, became culpable and sinned, for "the ultimate responsibility for evil in the world is God's, for the simple reason that it is He who created the world and it is He who permits monstrous suffering to take place."⁴ For this sin God has begun to repent by restoring Israel to its land and by abrogating the covenant and election which had such destructive results.

There are, indeed, minor themes in the Biblical tradition in which a Jeremiah or Job accuses God of grave injustice. And the intercession of Moses can move the Lord to repent of the evil which He thought to do to his people. Yet the instances in which God appears to work for harm, the plagues against Egypt and the Exile against Israel, are ultimately redemptive, not just for the people of God, but for all of His people. And accusations against God, while arising within and inseparable from faith, yield to the memory that such questioning not only reverses the role of creature and creator but disregards God's faithful love.

Eckardt's radical interpretation is unacceptable because it is no longer bracketed by the positive affirmations of God's lordship and love. A person who is upheld by the tradition of Israel cannot maintain a stance of judgment against God. Nor can such a person shift the blame for ultimate cruelty from man to God. The God of Israel is the God of mercies whose everlasting goodness has not only created the community of faith, but whose sustaining grace is experienced as a present reality. The God who responds to the afflictions of His people in Egypt and Canaan cannot be the God who commits genocide against this same people. And, the Christian will add, this God who revealed Himself in self-sacrificing love on the Cross cannot be one who crucifies His children.

C. A third, more prevalent and more attractive solution is to reject both of the above options and to appeal to the hidden or eclipsed God, to the God who is obscured by the extent and intensity of suffering and evil. Thus, Martin Buber, in a discussion of the Book of Job, speaks of a view of God in which God contradicts His revelation by "hiding His face."⁵ In a similar reference to Job, Franklin Sherman proposes to speak of God as inscrutable, as the "God of mystery."⁶

4. A. Roy Eckardt, "Is the Holocaust Unique?" *Worldview*, XVII, 9 (September 1974):

34. Cf. Alice L. Eckardt, "The Holocaust: Christian and Jewish Responses," *The Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, XLII, 3 (September 1974): 467-469, which summarizes Roy Eckardt's views on this matter.

5. Martin Buber, *The Prophetic Faith* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1949), p. 191.

6. Franklin Sherman, "Speaking of God After Auschwitz," *Worldview*, XVII, 9 (September 1974): 28. Sherman relates this concept to Luther's notion of the *Deus absconditus*, the hidden God, and cites the Latin translation of Isaiah 45:15.

I am less sure of the unacceptability of such an answer, for this "solution" is ambiguous. Appeals to a hidden God may simply be a confession that we do not understand, but believe in God, nevertheless. There is nothing wrong with that. For, in prolonged reflections on the Holocaust, one must, sooner or later, admit one's failure to understand. But what is objectionable in this approach is the reference to God at this point and in this way. First, appeals to God's hiddenness may merely obscure the problem that one wants to have it both ways. I mean by that, that the appeal to God's hiddenness intends to assert God's historical lordship while at the same time denying it for these specific events. God's hiddenness seems to imply His absence, an absence not just from human comprehension but from these dreadful events. Yet He is still in charge.

Speaking of God's hiddenness or mystery in this context may also imply that God is on trial, and the best defense that the believer can offer is to claim that God was not at the scene of the crime. The implication, in claims of God's hiddenness, that God is on trial, becomes apparent in the following adaptation of an Old Testament scene. One might claim of the Holocaust victims that "they cried aloud" but "no one answered, no one heeded." For God was hidden from them. And the cynic might say of God that "either He is musing, or He has gone aside, or He is on a journey, or perhaps He is asleep and must be awakened." These lines from a trial of faiths were said on Mount Carmel.⁷ But now the roles are reversed, i.e., the implicit charges are made against the God of Israel. God's hiddenness or absence in this setting counts against Him, or at least it did for Elijah and for everyone else on Mount Carmel. The reasoning is that if God had not been hidden or absent during the Holocaust, if He had been present, then the Jews would not have been destroyed. But, since they were destroyed, God must defend Himself, He must answer for His hiddenness, His absence, His non-interference.

What does the appeal to God's hiddenness really add to a confession that one does not understand? Surely it reflects the desire to relate even this most cruel of all events to our faith. It shows the willingness to understand all things in reference to God, without being able actually to come up with a satisfactory way of doing so.

One can honor the attempt to relate God to the Holocaust in other ways than to refer to God's hiddenness or absence, and I shall attempt to do that in a later section of this paper. For it could be that God was present and "revealed" in these events, but that His presence did not match our expectations and, thus, He was not seen by many.

D. Another distinct way of responding to the dilemmas raised by

7. 1 Kings 18:26-29.

the Holocaust reflects the classical theodicy response that does not deal at all with the benevolence or omnipotence of God but attacks the position of the challenger by showing that it leads to unacceptable conclusions. Classically, the reality of moral evil, of which the Holocaust is an example, is ascribed to human misuse of freedom. And if one objects to the possibility of the misuse of God's gift of freedom, then one is forced into the unacceptable conclusion of opting for a kind of existence that is no longer human, since it is strictly devoid of freedom. Emil Fackenheim has offered a rather similar *ad absurdum* argument for avoiding the conclusions reached by Rubenstein. Fackenheim writes:

I believe that whereas no redeeming voice is heard at Auschwitz a commanding voice is heard, and that it is being heard with increasing clarity. *Jews are not permitted to hand Hitler posthumous victories. Jews are commanded to survive as Jews, lest their people perish. . . . They are forbidden to despair of God, lest Judaism perish. They are forbidden to despair of the world as the domain of God, lest the world be handed over to the forces of Auschwitz.*⁸

The persuasiveness of this argument lies first in Fackenheim's recognition that the destructiveness of the Holocaust is not only a matter of the past but reaches into the present. For the Holocaust threatens the very heart of the covenant faith, namely, the conviction that the God of mercies is present in our historical world. Secondly, Fackenheim's argument appeals to many in the communities of faith because it resists such threats. He rejects the temptation to accept the drastic solution of abandoning the faith as the answer to the problems of an unassimilated past. Again, Fackenheim is right in his appeal not to give up the faith today only because we cannot explain or deal with (the most fitting term is the German *bewältigen*) the horrors of yesterday. But the drawback with his alternative is the reason offered for it. The Jewish people should do the right thing of keeping the faith for the wrong reasons of spite or defiance of Hitler and the forces of Auschwitz. Is Fackenheim calling for the sort of theological stubbornness or courage that clings to traditional tenets of faith only because not to do so would make evil's victory complete? One suspects that Hitler and the forces of evil are thereby honored too much. The argument sounds somewhat like that of a man convincing himself not to abandon his wife who has been raped, because abandoning her would be just the sort of thing that would please the rapist. If one overheard such reflections, the reasonable question would be to ask whether the man loves his wife. Why should covenant faithfulness and mutual love be destroyed by this disaster so that all that is left is defiance of the forces of evil?

8. Emil L. Fackenheim, *Quest for Past and Future: Essays in Jewish Theology* (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1968), p. 20.

II. *Misleading Assumptions Behind Holocaust Questions*

So much for four specific answers raised by the Holocaust, answers which all contain elements that appear in traditional theodicy discussions. They are all less than satisfactory, for the reasons given.

It could be that these "solutions" are all there is and that the hope for something more, or different, is a vain wish that reflects a lack of courage to live with the enigma of evil. And, yet, there are eye witness accounts of Jews who were faithful to the Law of God even in the death camps and who praised God right to their own cruel death—actions which are difficult to explain in connection with the four interpretations described. Lest one be tempted to suspect such persons of inconsistency, of not having thought through the implications of their own suffering, or of living that way for no good reason, one should continue looking for interpretations of the Holocaust that are consistent with, and support, these faithful ones.

A second, more philosophical reason for a continued search is the assumption that if the answers are dissatisfying, there may be something wrong with the questions. To be precise, there might be something wrong with the assumptions on which the questions rest. It strikes me that there are, indeed, such misleading assumptions which are so ancient, so ingrained and widespread that they tend to escape our notice. These assumptions are (A) that religion or commitment to God must yield human good, (B) that God's lordship over this world takes responsibility for the course of history out of human hands, (C) that God's action in history or His providence includes ultimately destructive events, and (D) that salvation and moral responsibility are separable.

A. The misleading assumption that religion or commitment to God must yield human good, or, in less guarded terms, that faith should pay off:

It seems reasonable to expect that, if the Lord of the covenant is one who creates and seeks man's well-being, then a pact with Him must lead to our own good. Examples of this confidence abound. One of the Deuteronomic variations of this theme says it in this way:

You shall walk in all the ways which the Lord your God has commanded you, that you may live, and that it may go well with you, and that you may live long in the land which you shall possess.⁹

A similar expectation is expressed in the King James translation of Romans 8:28, that all things work together for good with those who love God. And, lest we assume that the notion that religion is good for you belongs only to the past, we, ourselves, react with surprise that

9. Deuteronomy 5:33. Cf. Joshua 1:8 and the other many expressions of the Deuteronomic formula.

tragic events befall religious people, and we hope that the family that prays together stays together. Yet, the expectation that religion leads to our good or, at least averts disaster, meets with counterinstances. The Israelite kingdoms were destroyed and the people suffered exile. The "good" in Romans 8:28 was quickly qualified by tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, and nakedness in 8:35. And one also suspects that prayer is not a sure-fire guarantee against divorce or other calamities.

The expectation that faith will be rewarded seems to come naturally to everyone, not just to the worshipers of Baal but to Biblical authors, not just to secular Americans but to the Hebraic and Christian communities. And it may also lurk in the background of the Holocaust discussion. If God is both good and sovereign, then faith in Him must ultimately make sense by effecting man's good. But, of course, the sufferings of the Holocaust are irretrievable, and the suggestion that they may work toward some greater good, that those who died were means toward a better end, is abhorrent.

A truer response would be to relinquish the self-understanding of faith that binds God to man's good fortune. The covenant faith is for better or for worse. It is unconditional from God's side and should be unqualified from our side as well. And if that is a true understanding of faith, of the genuine Biblical meaning of commitment to God, then the rejections of faith that arise from an awareness of Holocaust suffering are profound non-sequiturs. Instead of questioning the love of God, we should question our own understanding of faith and our commitment to God.

And, yet, such an absolute rejection of an understanding of faith that binds God to human good probably goes too far. The Jewish tradition, especially, has a healthy appreciation of the good things of this life, and to separate faith from the assurance of God's good gifts may be more than objectionable. The Biblical writings abound with promises that envision a greater good. Nor are these visions incompatible with evil and suffering. New Testament letters, for example, encourage believers under persecution to assume present sufferings for an ultimate good. But man's good is often more a matter of belief and hope than of what is seen. And expectations that commitment to God, that faith will lead to a greater good are bracketed in such a way that they are compatible with a dismal present, with painful death, with the suffering of the innocent. In fact, the way in which these trials are borne becomes an expression of faith in the God who seeks the good of all men.

This amounts to two distinct claims. First, the believer affirms that God is good. And that affirmation can only mean that God is good to human beings, to us. But, at the same time, one would not want to make manifestations of God's goodness the justifying or verifying con-

dition of faith. There is, indeed, an expectation of human good based on memory and deferred hope. God has acted in creative, sustaining, and redemptive ways in the past. And in the last day there shall be vindication, justice and reward, for, in the full presence of God, suffering shall end, the dead shall be raised, and the highest good of man shall be realized. But commitment to God must not be dependent upon the balance of good over evil in this time.

B. The misleading assumption that God's lordship over this world takes responsibility for the course of history out of human hands:

1. This assumption behind Holocaust questions may be more inaccessible than the first. One detects its presence in a peculiar inconsistency between what we ascribe to the Lord of history and what we attribute to ourselves. The believer will be inclined to assume responsibility for his own acts. And he will not normally blame God for his own moral failures. Yet, when it comes to "big events," to acts of war, revolutions, to the fate of nations, the same person will be inclined to regard these as acts of God. This tendency is especially pronounced when the big events mean trouble. In fact, in the language of the law, the phrase "acts of God" uniformly refers to disasters.

This inclination to take responsibility for the course of history out of human hands has the seeming advantage of appearing to be religious. For, after all, one is ascribing great events to God's agency. But, when these events are the results of human hatred and cruelty, it would be more accurate to speak of human failure alone. That would also be more consistent, for if personal moral failures are our own fault, why should the moral failures of nations be anything but their own doing?

2. Another way in which this misleading assumption about divine ruling in history manifests itself is in the optimistic confidence that the worst will not happen. Contemporary expressions of such optimism are the convictions that God would not permit a global holocaust, a nuclear destruction of the earth, or the slow death of this planet by pollution. Among those who meant well toward the Jews and even among the Jews themselves there was a similar appeal to a *deus ex machina*: "The wholesale destruction of the Jews? Why God would not permit such a thing!" God is thought to see to it that human destructiveness is confined within certain limits. And, as to help for the Jews, who will intervene on their behalf when their life as a people is in God's hands (and when intervention is costly)?!

This kind of optimism is misplaced, for the destruction of the Jews proves that the worst can, and does, happen. Its prevention is a human responsibility. Moral obligation includes political and national duties. And the lives of nations are not in God's hands in such a way that they are not also always placed into human hands as well.

3. The belief in non-human, immediate divine intervention against

wholesale evil can also take the form of disapproval of those who make themselves responsible for the alleviation of suffering on a grand scale, of those who do not "leave it up to God."¹⁰ After World War II there were objections to a German street being named after Dietrich Bonhoeffer because he worked for the assassination of Hitler. Bonhoeffer was charged with preferring a "devil's machine," i.e., a bomb, to prayer and trust in God.¹¹ Apparently he should prayerfully have left it to God.

C. The misleading assumption that God's action in history or His providence includes ultimately destructive events:

1. It is a mistake to consider everything that happens as the will of God or as providential. The terms "providence" and "providential," whether applied to the experiences of individuals or nations, should be used only to describe events which are constructive or which are for man's good. The bitter experiences of the destruction of the Temple or of the Exile were seen as providential only because ultimately they served the saving will of God. These events were not finally destructive, for they were the means of returning Israel to its Lord.

2. Furthermore, providential events and responsible human acts are not mutually exclusive. Thus, divine love and compassion expresses itself historically and, penultimately, through the love and compassion of God's people. Isaiah declares that, in the vicarious suffering of the Servant, God restores all people to Himself.¹² And Paul speaks of God being at work in believers, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.¹³ The believer affirms of God that "He's got the whole world in His hands," without thereby excluding the conviction that the world is placed into human hands as well.

In regard to the Holocaust, this would mean that those individual Christians who were able to help Jews—aid that was given often at risk to liberty or to life itself—would attribute such acts not only to their own choice but to God's grace. Conversely, where such acts are wanting,

10. Similar uses of such expressions as "leaving it up to God," "it's up to God now," or the secular equivalent, "let nature take its course," can be found in discussions of medical ethics, particularly in the euthanasia debate. Here, too, the use of such expressions tends to be objectionable, not only because it implies a strict dichotomy between what is in God's hands and what is in the sphere of human responsibility, but, also, because a bad outcome can be blamed on God—"after all, it was up to Him." The only redeeming aspect of such expressions in a medical context is the fact that, ordinarily, one does not use such expressions except where the medical profession has done its best. That is not the case in the political context of the use of such expressions, where God is thought to act directly, to lead the course of nations and to prevent war, destruction and suffering, quite independently of the best efforts of the believing community.

11. Bethge refers to the same event when he mentions "Christians [who] dissociated themselves totally from the so-called high-treason activities of Bonhoeffer" (Eberhard Bethge, "Troubled Self-Interpretation and Uncertain Reception in the Church Struggle," *The German Church Struggle and the Holocaust*, p. 181).

12. Isaiah 52:13-53:12. This would be true regardless of the identity of the Servant.

13. Philippians 2:13.

there the grace of God Himself is denied and frustrated. And such obstacles to divine grace were present, not just in fear or indifference, but in the sort of flawed theology and ethics that regarded political protest and intercession as unacceptable interpretations of Christian obligation or of divine providence.

3. But there is another side to this understanding of providence. If only good events and genuinely moral decisions qualify for being deemed providential, what of the bad? Here the believer can speak only of human destructiveness or admit that he does not understand. There can be no comparable ascription of evil to God, even though that would create a certain theological symmetry. If one cannot live with this lopsided quality of providence and human responsibility, the only alternative that would provide some trans-human balance on the negative side would be to claim that the devil made me (us) do it. To praise God for His gifts and mercies or for the ability to do the right thing cannot imply the obverse of cursing Him for life's injustices, evils, and moral failures. We cannot claim to see the hand of God in history where there are only the bloody hands of men.

4. As to the Holocaust, it has no redeeming features that would qualify it for being seen as providential.¹⁴ It cannot be seen as the will of God, Dean Grüber notwithstanding,¹⁵ but is the outgrowth of the will of men who either no longer acknowledged themselves as children of God or were not grieved over the ruin of Joseph.¹⁶

D. A final misleading assumption about how to approach the Holocaust is to be found solely within the Church and primarily among Protestant churches. It is the presupposition that dealings with the Jews fall under a certain kind of soteriology, a doctrine of salvation in which salvation and ethics are separable. The reasons for the churches' preoccupation with salvation in regard to the Jews seem to include the concern of the New Testament writings with this issue, especially the letters of Paul. One could argue that if the persecuted people in the 1930's and early 40's had been any other group than the Jews, the churches might have seen their responsibilities more clearly. The fact that these were "the Jews," *die Juden*, brought to bear not only the charge of deicide and centuries of prejudice, but created the constant reminder that these are the people who should have accepted Jesus as

14. This is true unless one claims that the establishment of the Israeli state is such a redeeming feature. I consider the sufferings of the Holocaust to be too immense to be outweighed by any subsequent good or to become a means for anything else.

15. The Berlin Dean of the Protestant Church, Heinrich Grüber, who directed pre-war efforts to enable Jews to leave Germany and who cannot be considered anti-Semitic, still thought that, somehow, the suffering of the Jews was God's will. It seems that Dean Grüber's interpretation of providence had some influence on Richard Rubenstein's rejection of faith in a historical God who would do such a thing.

16. The allusion is to Amos 6:6 and describes the indifference of the institutional churches.

their Messiah but did not. In fact, continued Jewish obstinacy even allowed one to suspect that these misfortunes of the Jews were not altogether undeserved.

It is fair to say that this preoccupation with the salvation of the Jews has had less than praiseworthy results. Surely a better or more consistent understanding of salvation would not have yielded such results, but the actual reasoning was harmful. The peculiar logic always began with God's redemptive love and ended with a less than charitable view of the older brother.

Moreover, there was something wrong, not only with the understanding of salvation, but with the timing of such questions. To wonder about the salvation of the Jews when they were boycotted, deprived of their citizenship rights, imprisoned, and finally murdered reflects a fantastic confusion, a grotesque disorientation. To use the New Testament analogy of the Good Samaritan, it amounts to asking the beaten and disabled man by the wayside whether he is saved, rather than trying to help him. What was at stake during the period of the Holocaust was not the saving of Jewish souls, but the saving of Jews from destruction—which could have been the churches' practical expression of their own salvation. The inappropriateness of concern over the spiritual salvation of the Jews at that time is expressed in the harsh judgment of the young German Protestant theologian, Wolfgang Gerlach:

While for five long years Christians reflected on and discussed Romans 9–11 [chapters that deal with the salvation of the Jews] to be sure if and whether a Christian was "permitted" to aid the Jews and Jewish Christians who were in mortal danger, the National Socialist authorities prepared the schedules for the deportation trains.¹⁷

Questions of salvation might have been directed to the church itself if it had had a more Biblical concept of salvation. For the New Testament presents salvation as a new existence in which being saved and being responsible are inseparable. Thus, to be saved, to be a Christian, or to live under the kingship of God *is* to have the mind of Christ, is to do the will of God, is to be the new creation.¹⁸ To be saved is to do the right thing, which, in this case, means to respond in compassion to human suffering. To be a disciple of Christ is to do the will of God, and doing the will of God becomes the criterion for genuine Christian discipleship.¹⁹ For faith without works is dead.²⁰

17. Wolfgang Gerlach, *Zwischen Kreuz und Davidstern: bekennende Kirche in ihrer Stellung zum Judentum im dritten Reich*, dissertation manuscript (Hamburg, 1970), p. 461, my translation.

18. I was reminded of this important point by my colleague, Professor William Chalker.

19. Wolfgang Trilling, *Das wahre Israel: Studien zur Theologie des Matthäus-Evangeliums*, 'Studien zum Alten und Neuen Testament,' vol. 10 (Munich: Kösel Verlag, 1964), p. 189; cf. also pp. 30, 31, and 197.

20. James 2:26.

Therefore, morally responsible conduct is the living out of salvation with fear and trembling. Christian ethics is the practical expression of salvation. And where compassion and intercession on behalf of those who suffer are absent, where the will of God does not find practical expression in acts of love, there salvation is missing as well. Consequently, Christians could not Biblically assume their own salvation while remaining passive toward the suffering of the Jews.

So much for various misleading assumptions that seem to lead astray our reflections about the Holocaust. Some constructive efforts follow.

III *Constructive Efforts*

A. In *Night*, the autobiographical novel by Elie Wiesel, the reader confronts an unforgettable description of the slow execution by hanging of a Jewish child. To the question, Where is God now? the author replies, "Where is He? Here He is—He is hanging here on this gallows..."²¹ The reader does not know whether for the author the death of this child implies the death of God.²² But the Christian can affirm this vision of God in the hanged child without implying the final death of God. The Christian might also say of his Lord, "Here He is—He is hanging here on this gallows," and he would be remembering not only that other gallows in the form of a cross, but he would be led to such an affirmation by God's consistent identification with those who suffer. The Christian not only affirms with the Jew "that the God on high loves widows and orphans below..."²³ but adds that which is the heart of the Gospel, namely, that, in the Jew of Nazareth, God assumes,

21. Elie Wiesel, *Night, Dawn, The Accident: Three Tales* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1972), p. 72.

22. *Night* is autobiographical, and the death of God may have been a conclusion of the young Wiesel (cf. *Ibid.*, p. 43). And Halperin speaks of Wiesel as no longer having religious faith (Irving Halperin, *Messengers From the Dead: Literature of the Holocaust* [Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1970], p. 11). But such conclusions are misleading. In a 1970 address entitled, "Talking and Writing and Keeping Silent," Wiesel expressed strong objections to Rubenstein's atheism: "How strange that the philosophy denying God came not from the survivors. Those who came out with the so-called God is dead theology, not one of them had been in Auschwitz. Those who had, never said it. I have my problems with God, believe me. I have my anger and I have my quarrels and I have my nightmares. But my dispute, my bewilderment, my astonishment is with men. I didn't understand how men could be so 'barbarian'..." (*The German Church Struggle and the Holocaust*, pp. 271–272). Wiesel adds that the Holocaust is problematic precisely because one is a believer. "Can you compare today the tragedy of the believer to that of the nonbeliever?! The real tragedy, the real drama, is the drama of the believer" (*Ibid.*, p. 274). And, finally, Wiesel offers what can only be seen as a confession of faith: "To be a Jew is to have all the reasons in the world not to have faith in language, in singing, in prayers, and in God, but to go on telling the tale, to go on carrying on the dialogue, and to have my own silent prayers and quarrels with God" (*Ibid.*, p. 277).

23. Fackenheim, *Quest for Past and Future*, p. 189.

identifies with, and bears the suffering of this world. "Truly I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me."²⁴ Karl Stern is right when he says that it is Christ who is present in the agony of millions of dead,²⁵ but it took a Jewish Christian to see that. This identification with, and sharing of, human suffering is an expression of God's goodness and love. And it is not a particularly or exclusively Christian insight. It is a Biblical leitmotif. God took the part of a helpless people in Egypt and in the Exile, an act repeated in His identification with helpless Gentiles through the cross of Jesus. And, so, the proper term here is to speak of Biblical rather than of Christian theology.

The assertion that the sufferings of the Holocaust are shared—not explained, but shared—by God, or the affirmation that God is here hanging on this gallows, implies, of course, that the Holocaust cannot be seen as God's will. God desires compassion, mercy, and justice. The excesses of irrational evil that are the Holocaust are not demanded, justified, or imposed by God. But the eyes of faith may see God sharing the sufferings imposed by this inexplicable evil. That is the first constructive proposal.

B. Professor Franklin Sherman has not only described the first alternative, but has suggested a second: "God participates in the sufferings of men, and man is called to participate in the sufferings of God."²⁶ Sherman does not develop this second part of the statement, that men should share the sufferings of God, but it may be that this points to one of the most helpful ways of interpreting the Holocaust.

Why did Hitler and his many helpers destroy the Jews? Not for anything that the Jews did. Not for political, economic, or military reasons. They were destroyed for what they were, for what they are. And what they are is a peculiar people, a people set apart, a people elected and bound to God and to who He is. Jews are living reminders of a Lord whose sovereignty is universal and who condemns national chauvinism and ideological idolatry. This rebellion and idolatry, this practiced hatred of God, constitutes God's suffering. God suffers from the fact that His own creation wants no part of Him but insists on making its own gods. And the Jews, as God's people, share this suffering. The Jews were hated and destroyed because God was hated and would have been destroyed, if that were possible.

If that is true, then why were Christians not similarly destroyed?

24. Matthew 25:40.

25. Karl Stern, *The Pillar of Fire* (Garden City, New York: Image Books, Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1951), pp. 265 and 209.

26. Sherman, "Speaking of God After Auschwitz," p. 29. Sherman's original and much longer essay appeared in *Speaking of God Today: Jews and Lutherans in Conversation*, eds. Paul D. Opsahl and Marc H. Tanenbaum (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), cf. p. 157. This essay is one of the most helpful discussions of the Holocaust.

Christians serve the same Lord and should have elicited the same hatred from a totalitarian regime that called for *Gleichschaltung* or conformity in all spheres. Of course, some Christians were killed. But they had a choice, while Jews did not. And the choices of the churches tended to avoid becoming targets of ideological hatred by restricting their discernment and obedience of God's will to the inner man, rather than also insisting upon the divine will for justice and mercy in public and political affairs.

C. A third and last proposal focuses on the need for rethinking ethics in the light of the Holocaust. What God does tends to become the basis for what the believer is called to do. Thus, if God identifies in suffering compassion with the victims of the Holocaust, and if that is not merely a peripheral fact about God, then Biblical ethics must be oriented toward that divine act. The compassion of the God of history, of the God of Jews and Christians, gives rise to human obligation to act compassionately, in turn. Thus, God's mercy to the chosen people in the land of Egypt must be reflected in mercy to the sojourners in their own midst.²⁷ And Jesus' love toward his disciples becomes the measure of their responsibilities to each other and to all men.²⁸ The fitting response of the Christian to God's saving event in Christ is to become a Christ to the neighbor.

During the Holocaust, such an ethics would, of course, have constrained the Church to take the part of the Jews. Such an ethics begins with Jesus' identification with the persecuted rather than with obstructing a recognition of this affirmation by portraying the Jews as the enemy of Jesus. And this ethics would correct a misconceived soteriology to focus on God as the ground and source of salvation rather than judging others for what is taken to be an unacceptable response to this salvation.

Again, lest an appeal to a Biblical ethics that is based on divine love²⁹ and compassion should seem too general or bland, other ways of being ethical must be reconsidered to see how they account for this norm-giving mercy of God. Thus, a Lutheran ethics that proceeds with theological dualities and an independent doctrine of creation³⁰ must

27. Exodus 23:9, Deuteronomy 10:19, Exodus 22:21.

28. John 15:12ff.; I John 4:7ff., 16; Matthew 5:43-48.

29. Alan Davies, in a discussion of liberal theology, writes: "Love is the only valid dogma. The premise here is simple enough. A religion centered around a God whose supreme self-revelation is His nature as a God of love, cannot, on the theological level, endorse doctrines that are obviously hurtful and unloving without betraying its most profound commitment" (*Anti-Semitism and the Christian Mind: The Crisis of Conscience After Auschwitz* [New York: Herder and Herder, 1969], p. 148). My only disagreement with the author would be that, if he means to restrict this insight to liberal theologians, the love commandment appears in central place in rather wide circles.

30. The reference is to such works of the 1930s as those of Paul Althaus and Werner Elert where the law of God, whether in some *Uroffenbarung* or in the *Volk*, has lit-

remember that the witness to Christ is fitting in all realms and that the meaning of creation is to be found in Christ alone. The early Barthian "No" to cultural perversions of the Gospel and its theological other-worldliness must be qualified by that later turning to the world and its pains in order to reflect God's compassion for real human beings.³¹ The Catholic themes of natural law, right reason and justice may appear in a new light when one begins with an ethics that arises out of, and is shaped by, a divine compassion which exceeds all justice and looks to the personal love of God rather than to the abstract principles of natural law for direction and hope. Finally, the Christian identification with those who suffer does call for intercession for other groups in changed situations. Today, the Christian will not only speak for Russian Jews, but may see greater need for taking the part of Palestinian camp refugees than for endorsing uncritically all Israeli policies—and for the same reasons that he was called to take the part of those who suffered in the camps of an earlier time.

To sum up, this paper has tried to show that various interpretations of the Holocaust are either unacceptable or unfruitful and that the questions which arise from the Holocaust may contain assumptions about the nature of faith, providence, and salvation that cannot be endorsed by the believer once they are recognized. The paper has also offered some alternative interpretations of the Holocaust that point to the mutual sharing of suffering between God and men and direct Biblical ethics to focus upon God's compassion for man as its basic norm.

tle to do with the Gospel, except, of course, that the Gospel always affirms such nationalism in religious dress.

31. In the decisive years of the Church Conflict or *Kirchenkampf*, Barth did not say much on behalf of persecuted Jews. He, himself, made this admission in 1967: "I consider it as guilt on my part that I did not also (as Bonhoeffer) assert it (the Jewish question) decisively in the Church Conflict in a public way (for example in the two Barmen Declarations of 1934 which were drafted by me). A text in which I would have done that would of course not have been acceptable in 1934, given the frame of mind even of the 'confessors' whether in the Reformed or in the General synods. But that does not excuse the fact that at the time—because I had different interests—I did not at least formally fight in this matter" (Karl Barth, *Evangelische Theologie*, 28 [1968], p. 555; quoted by Eberhard Bethge in *The German Church Struggle and the Holocaust*, p. 167. The above translation is my own.)

Barth, of course, strongly opposed the Aryan Paragraph of the Nazi State as far as the sphere of the Church was concerned. And, in time, he not only became theologically concerned with the Jews, but was personally active on behalf of Jewish refugees in Switzerland. For a summary and evaluation of Barth's view of the Jews in the *Church Dogmatics*, vol. II/2, which was published in German in 1942, see Alan Davies, *Anti-Semitism and the Christian Mind*, pp. 113–126.

I believe that my own understanding of Biblical ethics as centered in God's compassionate identification with man affirms some of the "later" Barth's emphasis on the humanity of God, on God's turning to man in Jesus Christ. Moreover, it strikes me that Barth's theological turning point that leads to a more positive ethics, such as those in the essays of *Community Church and State* (New York: Doubleday Anchor Book, 1960) has its roots in the middle and late 30s, times of sufferings and trials for the churches as well as for the Jews, times that called for positive moral direction.

Two Philosophies of Jewish History After the Holocaust

TIMOTHY DWIGHT LINCOLN

TRADITIONAL JEWISH THOUGHT HAS AFFIRMED God's presence in history and that history has meaning given to it by God. This was often affirmed in the face of catastrophe. When Israel was driven into Exile, Deutero-Isaiah (Is. 40.2), for one, termed it God's judgment on the people's sin. In the face of another catastrophe, Titus' destruction of the Second Temple in 70 C.E., this punishment-for-sin formula was discarded—it was clearly inapplicable—but men such as Rabbi Akiba still affirmed God as the God of history, who would be present with His people in Exile.¹ God's presence was also affirmed in kinder ages. Moses Mendelssohn, for example, asserted boldly that what has happened (all history) is identical to the will of God.

All of this is *fact*—(he wrote)—it must be part of the original design and must have been allowed for or at least included in wisdom's plan. Providence never fails to accomplish its goal.²

Looking back over all of history, the history of the Jews included, Mendelssohn could affirm that Providential control had always been present.

Today, the reality of the Holocaust has called into question God's presence in history. Mendelssohn's remark, in the context of the post-Auschwitz world, is seen by many as obscene. The traditional Jewish philosophy of history, which sees a benign, active, Providential God overseeing the historical process—and His chosen people specifically—must be re-examined.³ This essay discusses the philosophy of Jewish history of two modern thinkers, Richard Rubenstein, in *After Auschwitz*,⁴ and Eliezer Berkovits, in *Faith after the Holocaust*.⁵ Before dealing

1. Emil L. Fackenheim, *God's Presence in History: Jewish Affirmations and Philosophical Reflections* (New York: New York University Press, 1970), pp. 25-30.

2. Moses Mendelssohn, *Jerusalem and Other Jewish Writings* tr. and ed. by Alfred Jospe (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), p. 68.

3. Christianity, which also has affirmed a God active in history, must also face up to the reality of the death camps. It is unfortunate that, as Seymour Cain observes ["The Question and the Answers After Auschwitz," in *Faith and Reason: Essays in Judaism*, ed. Robert Gordis and Ruth B. Waxman, (New York: KTAV Publishing House, Inc., 1973), p. 367], few Christian theologians have wrestled with the ramifications of Auschwitz.

4. Richard L. Rubenstein, *After Auschwitz: Radical Theology and Contemporary Judaism* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1966). Referred to hereafter as AA.

5. Eliezer Berkovits, *Faith after the Holocaust* (New York: KTAV Publishing House, Inc., 1973). Referred to hereafter as FATH.

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specifically with their ideas, a brief prolegomenon on the philosophy of history is in order.

The philosophy of history deals with many issues. Critical philosophers of history inquire into the nature of the historical method of inquiry, and confront such issues as the extent to which the discipline of history is scientific. The speculative philosophers of history, by contrast, look for grand patterns or meanings in history which elude the common historian. This essay is concerned with this second, speculative, philosophy of history. Three fundamental questions are asked by the speculative philosopher of history, and they will form the categories under which we will discuss the thought of Rubenstein and Berkovits. The first question is: What is the pattern of the past? A linear theorist might say that the pattern of history is steady deterioration from the ideal, or that it is constant upward progress. A cyclical theorist would see the pattern as only the repetition of a cycle with different people involved. A third pattern which might be discerned is no pattern at all. One might argue that history is chaos, merely the random "things that happened," the moments of time in Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-five*. Finally, one might combine elements of these three explanations and get a theory which sees history as a spiral, ultimately progressing or regressing, but not linearly.

The second question posed by the speculative philosopher of history is: What is the mechanism of history? One might respond that history demonstrates a few basic laws. One might construct a paradigm of history, such as the Hegelian dialectic.

Ultimately, the first two questions serve as an aid to answer the final inquiry: What does all of it mean? If one asks only the first two questions, one is not a speculator about history. "Ordinary" historians find countless patterns in history; they also debate the mechanics of how what happened did happen. But, in this question of meaning, the speculator's *Weltanschauung* confronts and judges history. Scientific rigor and logic would ask these speculative questions in the order which we have done. But one's *Weltanschauung*, by its very nature, colors this process. One cannot dispassionately look at history, grasp its pattern(s), construct a model of its mechanism, and then make an "objective" statement about the meaning of history. Just as in the case of Tillich's hermeneutical circle, the danger is present of finding in history precisely what one wishes to find. Musings over the meaning of history are ineluctably tied to the *Weltanschauung* of the speculator.⁶

Neither Rubenstein nor Berkovits identifies himself as a speculative philosopher of history. They are both theologians who do not ask these three fundamental speculative questions in the form which we have

6. We have taken the form of these speculative questions from William H. Dray, *Philosophy of History* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964), chapter 5.

presented them.⁷ Nevertheless, as theologians who have struggled with the reality of the destruction of the six million, they have become speculative philosophers of history.

Rubenstein sees a cyclical pattern in the lowest level of history. There is an undeniable progression from birth to death in human existence. Within these parentheses men experience love, pain, alienation, and gratification. They do great deeds and create many things. The new masses of humanity's next generation repeat the cycle. They do not improve upon it. Perchance this same schema holds true even for the histories of universes. The reason for this is that individual forms of life, says Rubenstein, are merely expressions of God, who is nothingness. Since there is clearly something, instead of only divine nothingness, it is possible that "nothingness cannot tolerate its own solitude and that, were the present cosmic era to end, there would be other cosmic ecstasies of nothingness" (AA, p. 141). Generations come and go; perhaps worlds and galaxies live and die. There is neither upward nor downward movement. Such is the pattern of the past.

The fact that Rubenstein is not a self-conscious philosopher of history is apparent when his ideas concerning the mechanism of history are analyzed. His terminology is not consistent. At times he talks a great deal about fate. For example, he writes that the Jews are "neither more nor less than any other men, sharing the pain, the joy, and the fated destiny which Earth alone has meted out to all her children" (AA, p. 58). The second part of the statement, that the Jews exist under the hand of destiny, could be a very traditional statement. However, the assertion that Israel does not bear a unique relationship to that force which directs history, makes it clear that Rubenstein is not equating his mechanism of history, fate, with the God of the fathers. He is quite emphatic on this point. After Auschwitz, he maintains, one cannot hold that God is the mechanism of history. Rubenstein reached this conclusion after visiting Heinrich Gruber, a Christian who struggled against the Nazi destruction of the Jews (he survived Dachau). Gruber believed that God had been instrumental in the Holocaust. After this conversation, Rubenstein writes, "I reached a theological point of no return" (AA, p. 46). To continue to believe that God is the mechanism, the ultimate cause, of history, and to maintain also that Israel is His chosen people, would necessarily include the affirmation that it was His will that the six million die under Hitler. This is simply impossible for Rubenstein to accept. Thus, he replaces the traditional God of history with fate. However, in other parts of *After Auschwitz*, Rubenstein uses other terminology to explain the mechanism of history. He uses the *eros-thanatos* conflict,

7. Reinhold Niebuhr, "only" a theologian, wrote the massive speculative philosophy of history entitled *The Nature and Destiny of Man* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1941-3).

first enunciated by Freud, to describe the tension which exists in the individual between his desire to live and to have an identity of his own, and the yearning which he feels to return to the divine nothingness, to die and give up his selfhood. The cyclic pattern of history is the outcome of the lives of people who are torn by this struggle between gratification and death.

Rubenstein's answer to the last of our speculative questions, the question of meaning, is brief. There is no meta-historical meaning to history. To be sure, there is meaning in living, in participating in its demonic aspects and goodness. However, if the Holocaust has shown anything, it is that man is trapped in an absurd universe. Progress is not part of the pattern. With only a little more enlightenment, mankind could rid itself of the gratuitous sacrificial killing of an animal. Yet, in the allegedly most enlightened age of mankind, satanic Nazi priests ritually murdered over a million Jewish *children*! While meaning can still be found, even in religious institutions, mankind is ultimately alone and just an expression constructed by the nothingness "which is at the beginning and end of creation" (AA, p. 221).

Rubenstein's speculative philosophy of history, then, is bleak. God may or may not be dead, but He certainly is absent from history and gives it no meaning. But we need not draw the same conclusion without examining his premise, his *Weltanschauung*. Rubenstein honestly says that he has been an existentialist from his childhood. By the age of ten he was convinced that death ultimately conquers and that "nothing in the bleak, cold, unfeeling universe was remotely concerned with human aspiration . . ." (AA, p. 209). Realization of what happened at Auschwitz only reinforced these views. However, in the light of Rubenstein's whole attitude, we wonder what difference it would have made in his thought if there had been no Holocaust. One certainly can find other examples of egregious wickedness, of other eclipses of God, to use Buber's phrase. In a totally absurd universe how can it be inferred that any event, even the fecal stench of Auschwitz, clinches the absurdity of existence once and for all? Are some events "more absurd" than others? If so, then some shred of meaning may lurk in history, even if it is only that man may occasionally conquer absurdity. That lesson could be passed on to the next lonely generation.

One other comment should be made about Rubenstein's presentation. He takes psychoanalysis very seriously, and it is entirely possible that the formation of his existentialist *Weltanschauung* is explainable in psychoanalytic terms. To read patent absurdity into history may be only the act of a given person. We do not mean to imply that Rubenstein is psychologically unhealthy. But, from a psychoanalytical point of view, we must note that childhood experiences do form one's *Weltan-*

schauung which, ultimately, determines the meaning that one sees in history. With a different background, a non-existentialist attitude might result. History might be viewed in a drastically different way.

Eliezer Berkovits answers the fundamental questions of the speculative philosopher of history very differently from Rubenstein. This is evinced, initially, in a distinction which Berkovits makes between two types of history. On the one hand, there is the history of the nations. Any patterns and explanations for this type of history can be expressed naturalistically in terms of natural resources, psychology, politics, and the like. Berkovits does not center his speculations about the historical pattern solely with this "power history." The other type is "faith history," the history of the Jews. These two histories interact, of course, and, because of this interaction, the pattern, mechanism, and meaning of faith history ultimately include power history. Berkovits sees a distinct pattern in faith history. There are cycles of birth, death, and rebirth into newness. After each catastrophe in Jewish history God has done something new with His people. After the destruction of the Second Temple, Rabbinic Judaism developed from the ashes. From the remnant saved from German crematoria, the state of Israel was founded. Faith history's rebirths do not occur in a vacuum. Israel, God's people, exists as an entity confronted by the forces of power history.

How power history relates to the Jewish people is explained in terms of history's mechanism. Here, Berkovits has two main lines of analysis. First of all, he sees history as the solution to a divine paradox. Why does unmerited suffering happen? In answering this question Berkovits interprets the verses in Is. 45.6-7 (which say that God creates both peace and evil) to mean that God created the possibility for both. He allows man to choose and does not interfere when his choice in favor of evil causes suffering. Thus, the question is recast as, Why is there a world of men at all? To this Berkovits responds,

It is not very profitable to argue with God as to why He created this world. He obviously decided to take His chance with man (FATH, p. 105).

God's dilemma of being both just and merciful is solved in history. Individual men are free to choose evil or good. God does not step in actively, but He remains present in history so "that man may not perish in the tragic absurdity of his own making" (FATH, p. 107). Israel is the sign of God's presence.

Berkovits' second line of analysis vis-à-vis history's mechanism is that history is a dialectical process.

Today, the dialectics of history is carrying mankind into a phase in which, "but by my Spirit," is no longer an ideal, but practical politics, the basic requirement for human survival. Dialectical materialism has suffered its own dialectical defeat. The scientific and technological transformation

of the human situation demands the spiritual reformation of men and nations. It is the irony of history, that, when materialism has reached one of its greatest triumphs . . . it has been outmaneuvered by a higher dialectics of the spirit (FATH, p. 140).

Since Berkovits is not a philosopher of history, he does not make a chronological list of all of the instances of this dialectic in history. His comment here refers to the present situation in which the United States and the Soviet Union, the two modern triumphs of materialism, have achieved such firepower that only a balance of terror remains. The two superpowers are thus forced to live decently or not at all. For Berkovits, this means that God has entered dialectically into the historical process. The nature of His entry is such that it neither destroys history nor ushers in the messianic age, at least not yet. Furthermore, it is often through Israel that God participates in the historical dialectic (see the discussion of the meaning of history, below). The present nuclear age, then, is, for Berkovits, another step in the dialectical process. Eventually, faith history (i.e., God) and power history will enter into a final dialectic. This is what he means when he writes that God's people, the Ought, will ultimately merge with the Is, the history of the nations, "when the Ought will be fully real and the real will be convincingly identified as the life which is the Good" (FATH, p. 112). Presently we experience the dialectical tension between these two elements in the form of conflict between the two types of history. Now Israel confronts power history.

In that confrontation, Berkovits sees judgment being passed. This is a strand of meaning which he finds in history, his response to the third of our speculative questions. In this context of judgment he sees Auschwitz and its aftermath as significant. Israel is God's chosen people, and as long as the Jews exist there is evidence for God's self-imposed hiddenness in all of history. How the nations react to Israel is seen as the sole criterion for valuing them positively or negatively. As he puts it, "through Israel God tested Western man and found him wanting. This gruesome failure of Christianity has led the Western world to the greatest moral debacle of any civilization—the holocaust" (FATH, p. 127). Judgment is sometimes delayed—God is long-suffering—but there is judgment and there is a judge. Confronted with Israel's existence, which bears witness to God's presence in history, the Nazis tried to destroy Him by destroying His people. They failed. The nemesis of history, God as judge, reduced the Third Reich from a military empire to two weak countries with shrunken borders. Judgment did not stop there. All of Western mankind has been judged because it stood by and allowed the Holocaust to happen. The West had hoped to join with the Nazi warlords in a crusade against Soviet communism. But, today, the one-time Great Powers of Western Europe, England and France, are militarily impotent. Communism has expanded dramatically instead of being

curtailed. America and Russia stand at the brink of a nuclear Final Solution.

Everyone of the ambitions that the forces of power history have been pursuing have been weighed and found wanting. Had the nations and their churches not been silent and indifferent to [Nazism] . . . world history would have taken an entirely different course and mankind would not now be balancing on the very edge of the thermonuclear abyss. This post-holocaust era is charged with the nemesis of history. This is the ignoble twilight hour of a disintegrating civilization (FATH, p. 133).

Thus, the nemesis of history has entered the dialectical historical process after Auschwitz. The meaning of that synthesis is judgment upon a bankrupt civilization. Mankind has entered a global age in which it must behave "Jewishly," restraining its quasi-omnipotent power in order to survive. In this new era, the state of Israel must be an example to the nations of how to live, following the lead of God's Spirit. This theme of Auschwitz and its aftermath as judgment is, for Berkovits, one example of the meta-historical meaning of history. Ultimately, all meaning and purpose in history are inferred only because of the existence of the Jews as a link between the divine and the world. God could only, as it were, make His presence known in the world's history by using a small, insignificant people. To use His power indiscriminately would destroy history. To use a large group, such as the Christian Church, as His witness, would say nothing about Him because Christianity is explicable in terms of power history. But Israel, a small people who have had an impact on history totally out of proportion to their numbers, is a symbol of the higher dimension in history. The Jews can be explained only in terms of God. No matter how "empty of God vast tracts of the wastelands of history may appear to be," He is known to be present because the Jews exist (FATH, p. 112). It is not clear whether Berkovits expects history, itself, to end with the final synthesis of faith and power history, although one might infer that this will result in the messianic age. The founding of the modern Jewish state is not the Messiah already, but is a smile on the face of the living God who hid His face at Auschwitz. However, "because of Israel the Jews know that history is messianism, that God's guidance . . . is never absent from the life of the nations" (FATH, p. 158).

Berkovits' argument reveals his commitment to traditional Judaism just as that of Rubenstein shows his existentialism. For the latter, the universe and its history are absurd. For the former, the existence of Israel precludes making such an assertion. The continuing presence of the Jews, the chosen people of God, a living anomaly, means that God is still present in history and that history has a God-given meaning (messianism). This line of thinking appears to be plausible. Israel can be

understood, Berkovits says, only in terms of its faith,⁸ not in terms of power history. This means, it would seem, that there is something unique about Judaism. One is necessarily led to the conclusion that God must be keeping a special watch over His people.

We must admit that we would consider more seriously this line of reasoning if it were espoused by someone totally outside of the Judeo-Christian tradition. But Berkovits speaks as a committed Jew. His *Weltanschauung* accepts the Jews' chosenness as a given. This argument from existence, potentially imposing, breaks down immediately when we realize that its conclusion is actually held *a priori*. The role of the *Weltanschauung* of the speculator is also evinced when considering Berkovits' nemesis of history. A line of reasoning similar to his is often used by some Christian Americans, who assume that America is God's elect because it has great natural resources, great material prosperity, talented athletes, and has never been defeated in a war. We suspect that Berkovits does not hold this opinion.

In the end, speculative philosophy of history is a function of the observer's *Weltanschauung*. It is a question of meaning, religious in nature as well as philosophical. It is a matter of faith.

8. See Emil Fackenheim, *Quest for Past and Future: Essays in Jewish Theology* (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1968), chapter 7, for a similar interpretation.

A Visit to Majdanek

FRANK S. PARKER

IN ADDITION TO MY UNIVERSITY TEACHING SCHEDULE, I am in the final stages of writing a legal treatise concerning the extradition of Hermine Braunsteiner-Ryan from the United States in August, 1973. This Queens, New York, housewife was returned to West Germany, against her will, to stand trial on charges of assisting in the World War II concentration camp extermination of 5,000 inmates during her tour of duty as an SS Führerin at the Majdanek Camp near Lublin, Poland. Braunsteiner-Ryan still sits in a Düsseldorf jail awaiting trial.

In the course of my research it was necessary to familiarize myself with the history of Nazi concentration camps in Poland. Thus, the following item in the New York Times for Sunday, November 3, 1974, caught my eye:

Oswiecim, Poland—Nearly 30 years after Auschwitz concentration camp was closed down, the underlying horror of the place seems diminished by the souvenir stands, Pepsi-Cola signs and the tourist-attraction atmosphere.

Despite chilling autumn rain, thousands of Poles and some foreigners visit Auschwitz every day. Most are modishly dressed and obviously too young to remember World War II.

They troop through the former prison barracks, gas chambers and crematoria, looking with interest at such gruesome displays as an enormous showcase filled with some of the human hair the S.S. used to make into cloth.

Then the visitors often stop for a snack in the noisy, cheerful cafeteria or a snack bar in the building that once housed Nazi guards, a few hundred feet from the nearest crematory.

The indirect lighting, modern facilities and movie auditorium in the building, plus the crowds of young people, create an impression vaguely reminiscent of weekends at New York museums.

At the souvenir stands, visitors can buy a selection of Auschwitz lapel pins in Polish and German, or picture postcards showing gas chambers and crematoria, or even souvenir Auschwitz ballpoint pens which, when held up to the light, reveal similar pictures.

For visitors wishing to stay longer, there is a hotel in the building.

"All that seems to be lacking," one disenchanted visitor remarked, "is a stand selling souvenir bones and ashes."

The piece caused me some thought. I have not visited Auschwitz, but I did spend a day at Majdanek less than two years ago. No doubt, current conditions at Auschwitz are as the article recounts. If so, they bear little resemblance to those that I experienced at the former camp which is still preserved on the Russian border-end of Poland. I left Majdanek thinking that every man, woman and child in the world who

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considers himself concerned with his fellow man should have the opportunity to witness what went on there. Therefore, I cannot welcome the trend to commercialize Auschwitz. Some day, it will happen at Majdanek. One more opportunity for man to learn from his past mistakes will be gone.

At the end of the Second World War, the Polish Government decided not to destroy Majdanek Concentration Camp. Instead, the government dedicated it as a memorial to the courage of the Polish people and declared it a national museum. Because of the political situation in that country, few people from other nations have visited it, and a great many Poles, understandably, prefer to write off World War II as a bad dream. They don't want reminders, so Majdanek is not heavily patronized by natives, either. Now that Poland is starting to assume a more active role in the world community, there may be a change. Tourism should increase. A new restaurant and guest house are being constructed.

I visited Majdanek on a beautiful morning in May. The weather was warm, the sun shining. Two miles away, people thronged the streets of Lublin. In Majdanek, all was deserted. Traffic sped by on the main road. The occasional beep of an automobile horn was the only reminder that one remained a part of the real world. Perhaps, more accurately, one was still in sight of the real world.

There is no way to prepare adequately for Majdanek. Reading about it, seeing pictures, talking to survivors, all these count as fragmentary attempts. For the brutality and horror one is ready, but not for the efficiency. It could have been a Mercedes-Benz factory. Everything was so neat, clean and functional. In one case, the starting material is a hulk of metal, cloth, wood and other materials; the end product turns out to be a shiny roadster. In the other case, the starting material was a healthy human being guilty only of displeasing the Nazis. The end product turned out to be the ashes of a totally worked-out, recently dead cretin. Something about Poland must have inspired the German planners. There exists a slickness of design there that was never matched in the camps built in the Fatherland.

If Majdanek had resembled an American prison of the same era, it would not have seemed so disturbing. Places of misery that they are, the San Quentins and Sing Sings can be rated as functionally and architecturally ridiculous. Wasted, impractical mountains of concrete abound. Very little space is productively utilized. Large numbers of guards are needed to supervise prisoners. The American prison architects must have been misfits. Designing an outhouse appears beyond the capacities of most of them. Majdanek is in a different league. Every inch of space was utilized. Every building there was placed in logical functional succession. Intelligent men constructed it. Many of the same men today build houses,

roads, and hospitals in Germany and Austria. Clearly, their on-the-job training helped.

Dividing the spoils must have been easy in Majdanek. The prisoners stripped on entry. Clothes in one pile, shoes in another, glasses in a third, money and valuables in a fourth. Anything that a person treasured enough to carry with him on his last journey was taken away. Even hair fell to the onslaught. Each pile of merchandise went into separate warehouses, and these were so arranged that trucks could easily come to pick up spoils and depart without having to mix with prisoners. The SS thought of everything.

The first selection took place at the unloading platform. Those healthy enough to work were led to the barracks at the left. The unfortunate were dispatched to the gas chamber, just a few feet away. The close proximity could not be an accident. It must be remembered that there were hundreds of prisoners to each guard. Sloppy arrangements could encourage revolt. If the sick and aged were marched half the length of the camp, suspicion would arise. However, moving them just a few feet for a "bath" would appear ultimately reasonable.

Months later, the prisoners who had been led off to the left would be back at the forming area. This time they would continue across to the right and take their own last bath. By now they would be as sick and as aged in body as the first group had been in years. A month at Majdanek was the equivalent of a year in normal life. Virtually no one lived through two winters.

Even after death, Nazi efficiency was not done with the corpse. The route from the gas chamber to the crematorium was all downhill. It is a lot easier to push dead weight than to pull it. Before burning, the body was passed through a dental inspection room, where all gold in the teeth was removed. Then burning began. The SS, like a good housekeeper, wasted nothing. Ashes were collected and stored in large bins. A letter was sent to relatives of the deceased. "We regret to inform you your relative died from typhus at Majdanek. To prevent the spread of the disease, it was necessary to burn the body. The ashes have been saved for you. Order them by sending 20RM to us." Of course, the ashes were commingled. No possibility existed of receiving a relative's own ashes. A last heartless abuse of the prisoners was being practiced. Their relatives were tricked into paying the expenses for their death.

Two buses stood alone in the parking lot on the day that I visited Majdanek. The one hundred passengers, all high school students, fanned out from building to building. I was not the only one stunned by the sights. Two girls passed me, tears streaming from their eyes. These teenagers had just visited the warehouse containing the pile of infants' shoes taken from them moments before death. If these Polish high school stu-

dents had been born fifteen years before, their shoes might well have adorned this pile. The shoes of uncles, aunts, and cousins probably did.

One small group of male students had something else on their minds: specifically, the butt of their very feminine tour guide. The smirks and wisecracks provided a pleasant relief from the normal camp tone. The miniscule blonde, well aware of the attention that she was receiving, wiggled some more. I, too, welcomed the distraction. Life and health in the jaws of death. In time, however, even the blonde could not keep her pursuers from forgetting what had happened at Majdanek. By the time we reached the huge concrete memorial, her comments were being treated in a state of silence. Even her physical charms took second place to a display of uninterrupted evil.

I made two small experiments in order to get some feel of what had gone on at Majdanek. The first was to spend five minutes in a barracks. The door to the outside remained open. Within two minutes, I found myself moving toward the air current. The musty smell and lack of oxygen were sickening. My stomach churned and my head throbbed. All I wanted to do was escape to the sunshine. To think of 1,500 people jammed together in this small wooden enclosure for hours on end filled me with horror. I could not stand five minutes' worth all alone.

My second experiment was to walk from the city train station to the camp. As the crow flies, it is two miles, but winding through the narrow streets doubles this distance. The last three-quarters of a mile are straight uphill. The grade is extremely steep. I am in reasonably good shape and often walk five miles without much effort. On this particular trek I stopped at least five times. At the top of the hill, I headed for the small cafe like a homing pigeon coming back to base. The Majdanek prisoners had no beer break. They were scared, tired, sick and starved. One stop could bring death by gun shot. As I drank my beer, I felt very lucky to have climbed the hill as I did, under such different circumstances.

Steep as the hill is, beauty abounds on either side of the road, adding to the shock awaiting at the summit. Suddenly, barbed wire and gun towers are everywhere. I thought immediately of William Holden in *Stalag 17*. Just one look at Majdanek was enough to swear me off of Hollywood prison escape fiction forever. It would take a miracle to escape from Majdanek, but two hundred such miracles occurred in four years. Interestingly, almost all of the escapes happened while prisoners were on work details away from the camp. The Germans took great pains to keep down the numbers leaving home.

Each visitor to Majdanek must come away with one particularly strong impression of horror. Mine came from recalling something I had read in Braunsteiner's first statement to the Vienna police at the time of

her 1946 arrest. The words "Roman Catholic" had been typed by the police officer in the space asking religious persuasion. This fact kept passing through my mind. How could a follower of Jesus Christ take part in the activities of this camp? Did His death mean anything to her? Did the teachings of His Church lead her to stronger reactions than a mere displeasure at what was going on? Did she ever beg His forgiveness for what she had done to Jews, yes; but also to thousands of Catholic Poles? I suppose, as a Catholic priest, the shame that a member of our church did this was stronger for me than it might be for others. Braunsteiner was by no means alone in the Majdanek persecutions, but each one must account for his or her own guilt. I wondered if she had.

Near the magnificent medieval tower, in the old city there is a run-down building which houses the Majdanek Relief Center. Every day, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., it is jammed with former concentration camp inmates. A small amount of special government aid is available to them. All look older than their years. Yet they lived when 350,000 died, so that their strength must have been, at one time, awesome. The woman sitting next to me told of back pains and "liver spasms" that, for years, have prevented her from sleeping a full night. Her husband, another Majdanek inmate, has been in and out of hospitals two dozen times. He has been partially blind since a female guard struck him between the eyes with a stick that she wanted to break in two pieces.

The whole room was filled by people with similar stories. Reparation payments and soft words by the West German government notwithstanding, many Polish people still suffer from the effects of World War II. West Europeans among concentration camp inmates are in a different category. For the most part, their imprisonment is but a black memory. Good food and a booming standard of living have divorced them physically from the past, but not mentally. The West European and Israeli survivors are far less reluctant in their hatred of Nazis than are their Eastern counterparts. It is the Western victim who demands punishment even now. This is understandable. Life has become good; if it were not for the Nazis, it always would have been good. A Polish inmate never had a good life and still does not. Nazi persecution was worse than what has followed, but only quantitatively. Condemnation of Nazis is lost in a "what's-the-use" attitude. The fate of Braunsteiner-Ryan does not particularly interest the Poles. It interests Western inmates vitally—perhaps too much. Their desire to have her punished is not appealing when it is so nakedly exposed. Polish indifference is more appealing because it comes in the midst of hardship. The outside observer wishes to vindicate them even if they do not desire vindication.

Before seeing Majdanek and its victims, I felt much more sympathetic toward Braunsteiner-Ryan than afterwards. My doubts about the

accuracy of some witness testimony remains unabated. The 30 year hiatus before arrest seems excessive. The casualness of American judicial review disturbs me. Giving her to West Germany for trial appears wrong. Nonetheless, I can not comprehend how any human being could have worked for the SS at Majdanek. That people could, and seemingly treat such work as just another day's labor, proves that bestiality lurks close to the surface in the souls of many citizens who, under other circumstances, never would dream of committing a crime.

Although Lublin residents try not to think any more concerning Majdanek, its effect on their lives still is transluminously present. Spend one day in Lublin and you know that something is out of whack. Humans treated like cattle for five years can not shake off the effects in one lifetime. Russian domination and Communist administration of Poland are beyond the scope of this article, as well as surpassing the knowledge of the author, and what degree of the blame the Russians must accept for the present isolation and poverty of Poland, I do not know. Whatever the true answer, the Communists took over in the midst of utter desolation. Braunsteiner and company did not leave much behind with which to rebuild. To the Poles' credit, they have rebuilt themselves, at least, partially.

Before the time of the Nazis, Lublin was an agricultural center of 100,000. Today, more than 250,000 people live within the city limits. A large majority work in the automobile and farm machinery plants in the area. The city has two universities, including the only official Catholic university presently permitted in the country.

Understandably, Poland became less interested in the West after World War II. Russian occupation was in large measure accountable; but the aversion went deeper. The West had not intervened effectively on Poland's behalf, either in 1939 or later on during the course of the war. Even the Russian-controlled Eastern Zone had no appeal, because the residents spoke German. Poland shut its borders and its mind. The schools taught Russian as the second language and western tongues were never heard.

A foreigner not speaking Polish can survive today in Lublin only if he resigns himself to talking with no one under forty years of age, and can speak English, French and German. Before the war, many Poles had worked or travelled in France, Germany or England. Although the rust shows, they still can communicate in these languages. Among the young, Romance and Germanic languages are almost totally unknown. Perhaps this will change, but thirty years of contact with, and learning from, the West is irretrievably lost. Until recently, brain surgeons and piano movers were paid the same wage in this most fundamental of Communist nations. No inducement to learn other languages existed. Job promotions were based on party connections, not language knowledge.

Two hotels of the better commercial variety are the best bet for travelers to Lublin. These are western in appearance; a bath comes with each room. From the outside they look successful and urbane. The first shock comes on seeing five clerks doing the work of one. Shifts are twenty-four hours long and then the tired worker has forty-eight hours free. If the western visitor is lucky, one of the female clerks will speak a bit of German, assuming that she is not so weary that she has forgotten it all. Otherwise, registering for a room and getting a key is an adventure carried out in sign language. The restaurant is worse. Words such as water, coffee, whiskey mean nothing to the help. Ten dollars worth of a Polish bill sends everyone running in circles looking for change. A request that the restaurant bill be added to the room bill is greeted with bewilderment. The local tourist information office is no help. "We speak English, French, German and Russian," the sign proudly proclaims. It must have been composed before the present occupant arrived. A stunning beauty, she flashed a smile which would launch seven nuclear navies. Then she shook her head negatively to my basic inquiries in English and German. Momentarily, French looked more promising. However, when the first five questions all brought the response "*Je ne comprends pas*" (I don't understand), I gave up and staggered on my way.

I mention the "provincialism" in Poland to illustrate that World War II is not yet finished. I do not mean to poke fun at the Polish people. Kindness and helpfulness can be expressed without words. People walked blocks out of their way in order to be sure that I reached my destination. Old ladies handed me bus tickets when I didn't know enough Polish to ask the amount of the fare. Taxi drivers never cheated me. Government officials gave me full assistance. As a visitor, I was wonderfully treated by one and all. The shame is that they have so little but are willing to give so much. In the advanced West, we have so much and give so little. Maybe Poland is not so badly off after all. At least, the choice to be selfish should have been their own to make. The Wehrmacht deprived them of this opportunity.

Poland has rebuilt its economy, slowly, and inefficiently, to be sure. Nonetheless, the country now can begin to enter into the East-West trade goldmine that their Eastern bloc neighbors have found. However, it is going to take them so much longer to succeed because of their quarter-century sleep. Premier Gomulka never visited the West in his life. His successor has, if only as a worker in Belgian coal mines. Reentry into the world community will be painful. The average citizen of Lublin is poorly clothed, poorly fed, poorly housed. True, things were worse ten years ago; but this only prevents revolution. However, thirty years after the Germans ran home westward, Poland still has not recovered. When World War II started, life in Germany was five times better than in Poland;

today the gap is double. Only the highest of Polish functionaries lives in a manner equivalent to the poorest West German. This, after Germany destroyed Poland and left 10,000,000 dead.

If, as well may occur, the concentration camp at Majdanek loses its essential character at some future date, the loss of Jewish identity in the Lublin area will have become total. At the present time, Lublin is *Judenfrei*. The spirit of anti-Semitism which resurfaced in the post-war Peoples Republic of Poland finished, in a non-violent manner, the work started by Hitler in a violent fashion. It is unlikely that even 100 Jews live today in Lublin.

The final disappearance of Jews from Lublin ends a bittersweet residence extending over 600 years. 1318 C.E. is the first recorded reference to Jews living in this city, 109 miles southeast of Warsaw. Even then, Jews were not welcome, and were forced to live in the dangerous confines outside the walls of the city. In 1375, King Sigismund III lifted this restriction.

During the next five centuries, Jewish people were an important, if not always appreciated, part of area life. Always active in trading and commerce, by the nineteenth century Jewish management and workmanship caused the leather and cigarette manufacturing factories to flourish.

Intellectually, Jewish physicians from Poland were considered, for many centuries, as being among the best in the country. Similarly, Lublin became renowned as a center of rabbinic wisdom and the observance of Jewish practices. During the middle ages, the city was the site of a semi-autonomous Jewish legislative body.

As Lublin grew, so did the number of its Jewish inhabitants. By 1857 they numbered 8,747, 56% of the total population. During the next 80 years, the population of Lublin spiralled uncontrollably. Thus, the Jewish percentage of the city slipped at the same time as the absolute numbers rose significantly. By the start of 1939, over 39,000 Jewish people resided in Lublin. Soon this was all to change.

Duplicating the earlier actions of Cossacks and Tatars, the Nazis conquered Lublin. This event occurred on September 18, 1939. Almost immediately, the Jewish population was devoured. 30,000 Lublin Jews were shipped to Belsen, many dying on the journey; most of the others died soon after arrival. A fate of terrible suffering and death at Majdanek or Majdan Tatarski awaited the other Lublin Jews. No matter where they were sent, chances of survival were most minimal. The very few who did live, returned to a Lublin which did not welcome them. What happened to this handful is difficult to say; but they no longer live in Lublin.

As could be expected, the present authorities pay no attention to the history of the Jews in their city. The uninitiated would have no way of

knowing that they ever lived in Lublin. This oblivion is occurring even at Majdanek. In the whole day that I spent at Majdanek, not once did any of the camp-museum officials emphasize the enormous number of Jews among the dead. At all times, the dead were referred to as Polish citizens. Although true, this statement could lead to a wrong impression, since specific mention was made of Jewish inmates from Slovenia and Greece. It would be easy to assume that Polish Jews were sent elsewhere. My direct questions on this matter were answered in vague generalities.

If the Jewish suffering at Majdanek follows Jewish history and Jewish presence in Lublin into a state of suspended animation, much of whatever lesson that the Holocaust can provide for future generations will be lost. To make a Disneyland fantasy of Majdanek, as has occurred at Auschwitz, would be the last straw.

The Passover Seder: On Entering the Order of History

MONFORD HARRIS

I

THE PASSOVER HAGGADAH, A MISCELLANY OF Biblical and Rabbinic quotations, historical reflections, strange songs, assorted prayers, obvious questions and obvious answers is a remarkable work.

Yet it is elusive. It grew slowly and, therefore, appears to be a rather disorganized jumble of material, put together without transitions. Parts of it were shifted from one point to another, perhaps for propaganda purposes¹ while changes may have been made in a word or two for protective purposes.² The fact of such shifts and changes was, quite naturally, soon forgotten, and traditional mystical commentators then often attributed profound esoteric teachings to the altered texts. Modern commentators, on the other hand, tend to understand the Haggadah as a rather obvious esoteric text, reflecting particular historic situations, and directed, on the whole, to the younger generation, instructing it about the Jewish past, even to the point of using childish devices for keeping the children awake.

But the Haggadah is a unique work. It deals with an event that, from our vantage point, reportedly took place some thirty-five hundred years ago, and deals with it through the vehicles of food and recitation. It is the liturgical text of a special kind of feast, "the history feast par excellence of the world."³

It is a highly controlled, carefully regulated feast. It is called *Seder*; it not only embodies order, it is order. The fifteen rubrics from *Kadesh* thru *Acceptance*, must not only be enacted, they must also be proclaimed. The ordering itself is an intrinsic part of the order.

II

This history feast, involved with order, presupposes certain foods and liturgical statements. The food is itself part of the recitation. The opening statement, "This is the bread of affliction," says more than the

1. David Daube, *The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism* (London, 1956), pp. 192-194.

2. Louis Finkelstein, "Pre-Maccabean Documents in the Passover Haggadah" *Harvard Theological Review*, 36 (1943): 1-38.

3. Martin Buber, *Moses* (N. Y.: Harper Torchbook, 1953), p. 73.

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words would seem to mean. For "Samuel said, '*Lehem Oni*,' *Lehem* to which we respond with many words."⁴

The first of the responses is the four questions. The youngest child asks them. Should there be no children present, an adult asks. Should it happen that there is only one person at the Seder then he, in his solitude, must ask. These questions, which begin the Seder, after the opening announcement about the bread of affliction, which is a bread rich in responses, are not the only ones. There are many questions in the Haggadah: those of the four sons, those concerning the three basic foods, the song of questions ("who knows one,") etc. It is clear that the initial four questions and the questioning sons involve children; but, as the medieval wood cuts often accompanying the Haggadah indicate, the children are not necessarily young. Moderns often understand the Seder as a child-centered celebration. This, however, is not true. The traditional Seder is both youth-centered and adult-centered; each points to the other. The section about the four sages who spent the night recounting the Exodus from Egypt points to the adult-centered aspect of the Seder as significantly as the four questions point to the youth-centered aspect. The function of questioning is the issue.

III

The phenomenon of questioning has been studied by Erwin Straus, who states, "It is a questioning being that faces the world when man looks at things, turns to his fellow man or reflects upon himself."⁵

The questioner and the person questioned direct themselves, in their question and answer, toward the order of things. The order is understood by each one as one and the same for all of them and, therefore, valid and obligating, tying and binding. . . . They understand each other through the order in that they communicate with each other about it.⁶

Prime examples of asker and answerer are the Mother and Child.

With the question "What is that" the child gives us to understand that he has discovered the universality of language at the same time as *universalis in rebus*. He does not ask his Mother "What do you call this?" but rather "What is this?" Things are their names, which after all, appear as immanent attributes of things to the child, all belong to a general order. The child's parents did not create the order. They are familiar with it and know it, but—and this is just what the child's question proves—they are also subject to it. The order, arrived at through the name, is universally valid and universally obligatory.⁷

This is true of the Passover Seder: the child becomes aware of the fact that there is a Seder, an order, that the parents did not create but

4. Tractate *Pesahim*, page 115b.

5. Erwin Straus, "Man: A Questioning Being," in *Phenomenological Psychology*, (N. Y.: Basic Books, 1966), p. 166.

6. *Ibid.*, pp. 175-176.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 183.

to which they are subject. They teach it to him, they mediate it to him. The child also becomes aware that his parents are creatures, not creators, of the order that exists independently of them, and that is incumbent on both of them. The Seder directs both of them. This orientation presupposes communication in it and about it. For the child, the Seder is not involved with wish fulfillment for himself. The four questions are not the private language of childhood. They are the language of community order.

One is not to assume, however, that the child immediately becomes an adult. As Straus explains:

We do not claim that the child knows this content in all its implications. Nevertheless we are justified in stating that, with his questions, the child is oriented toward an anticipated, determinable order and that in questioning, he requests its determination.⁸

The Haggadah presupposes this; the section of the four sons embodies this; different types of questioners are taken into account. Some sons know the content in all its implications; some must be urged to ask; and, of those that know the content, some do not request the *determination*. The third and fourth sons fit Straus' description, "With his first question . . . , with the slow building of his vocabulary the child attains entry into an area that extends far beyond himself into a sphere of order that permits him to shape his own life but also commits him to doing it."⁹ The third and fourth sons can be characterized as the ones that are slow in building up vocabulary.

The wicked son, the one counterposed to the wise son, is significant. Note that it is a wicked son, not a stupid one, who is counterposed to the others. He is the one who rejects entry into an arena that extends beyond his *own* horizon of physical existence; he refuses to reach beyond himself into another sphere of order.

This distinction merits our attention. It is shocking that the Haggadah presupposes a wicked son. Yet the wicked son is a necessary part of the Haggadah, which is finely attuned to Jewish historic existence and to the initial historic situation. In Egypt, in their enslavement, the Israelites had wicked sons. When Moses saw the two Hebrews fighting he said to the *rasha*, "Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow?" (Exodus 2:13). J. Pedersen interprets this passages as Moses "addressed the sinner; i.e. he who was wrong," and adds that "In the conflict between Yahweh and Pharaoh the latter declared that he had sinned: 'Yahweh is righteous, and I and my people are the sinners (*hareshaim*).'"¹⁰

Pedersen, in discussing "the righteous" and "the *rasha*," explains that

8. Ibid., p. 184.

9. Ibid., p. 185.

10. J. Pedersen, *Israel: Its Life and Culture* (London, 1946), Vol. I, p. 418.

...in a mutual relation he is the righteous who maintains the duties which the fellowship implies for him; he does what he is bound to do; but when the other one does not do his duty, he will not get what is due to him according to the community... The sinful deed is by its very essence a breach of peace. But it does not only mean that one neglects giving another what is due to him; it means that one's soul is diseased. The soul only exists as a link in an organism with which it is intimately interwoven. The breach of peace is a result of a soul misjudging this reality and acting as if it were isolated, something apart.¹¹

The wicked son is the one who does not do his fellowship duties. He acts as one apart. He, therefore, will not get what is due him according to the community. The Haggadah states it in primal terms: "He excluded himself from the community (the *K'lal*); had he been there [Egypt] he would not have been redeemed." In Straus' terms, the wicked son excludes himself from the order, he does not "reach beyond himself."

IV

What do those who enter the order achieve? We enter, individually or in groups, the realm of history. The insights gained through questioning are transmittable; they are possessions bequeathed from one generation to the next.¹²

This is the goal of the Seder. Its participants enter the realm of history for "in every generation a person is obliged to see himself as if he went out of Egypt." The "as if" is crucial, perhaps the most sensitive touchstone in the entire Haggadah. A statement of Straus', whose rhythm is reminiscent of the Haggadah, will serve to clarify the *as if*.

As a questioner he breaks through the confines set by his senses. In the act of thinking, he reaches through the perspectives to the What, through the time bound to the timeless, from the fragments to the whole, from confusion to clarity. The pleasure inherent in understanding has its source in the transition from the limitations of sensory experience to the view of the comprehensive order. Nevertheless in breaking through the horizons of senses, man... is held in his place. He is forced to express the whole through parts, the what through perspective images and the timeless through the time bound... The representation of the comprehensive order, therefore, requires both humility and courage: humility and patience, and self denial in striving to understand the order in itself, courage in the attempt to represent the whole with particular means.¹³

This is the problem faced by the Haggadah. The Jew must break through the confines set by his senses; he must see himself going out of Egypt. But the Jew is in his particular generation, in his place. He is not in ancient Egypt, nor above time and place. He is here and now. The Haggadah is not a platonic liturgical text, dealing with realms above time and place. The order is the realm of history. The "as if," then, is the problematic issue.

11. *Ibid.*, pp. 418-19.

12. Straus, *Op. cit.*, p. 186.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 187.

Because of this, what the Haggadah avoids is also significant. The Haggadah might have programmed, but very wisely did not, the reenactment of the Exodus from Egypt. It might have had the participants march around with a stick and bundle over their shoulders, as did the Jews of the Caucasus region.¹⁴ This is not done for it would have been involved with the abolition of time through the imitation of archetypes and the repetition of paradigmatic gestures. The Seder does not programme an "*ab origine*, at the beginning of time," for "he who reproduces the exemplary gesture thus finds himself transported into the mythical epoch in which its revelation took place."¹⁵ Eliade, whose analysis we quote, characterizes these "archaic systems" as involved with "the abolition of concrete time," and are, therefore, anti-historical. He explains that

this refusal to preserve the memory of the past, even of the immediate past, seems to us to betoken a particular anthropology. We refer to archaic man's refusal to accept himself as a historical being, his refusal to grant value to memory and hence to the unusual events (i.e., events without an archetypal model) that in fact constitute concrete duration.¹⁶

This is precisely what the Haggadah does not do. Its rejection of the primal reenactment is a central and crucial necessity for our understanding of the order that is entered, the order of history. J. R. Wilch, in his book dealing with the Bible, clarifies the issue. He writes,

Even *the cult* did not attempt to actualize past events in the recitation of the creed or in the present performance of the ritual—that would be "de-historicizing." It only called them to mind with the concept of *corporate personality* and observed their memory because of the continuing effect of their consequences. *Therefore it is untenable that there be represented a concept of the actualization of past or future events in the present situation or that a confrontation with God may transpose man beyond the limits of time.*¹⁷

The Haggadah does not attempt to actualize past events. A ritualistic enactment of going out of Egypt, a marching forth by the members of the Seder would be a de-historicizing performance. As Eliade puts it, "The God of the Jewish people is no longer an oriental divinity creator of archetypal gestures, but a personality who ceaselessly intervenes in history, who reveals his will through events."¹⁸

The Seder calls to mind the past events with the concept of corporate personality and the continuing effect of the consequences of the Exodus. The confrontation with God does not transpose man beyond the limits of time. The stress is "in every generation" and this is "as if." There is no exemplary gesture.

14. H. Schauss, *The Jewish Festivals* (Cincinnati, 1938), p. 65.

15. M. Eliade, *Cosmos and History* (N. Y., 1959), p. 35.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 85.

17. J. R. Wilch, *Time and Event* (Leiden, 1969), p. 170.

18. *Cosmos and History*, p. 104.

V

While there are no exemplary gestures in the Haggadah, it is remarkably rich in numbers, from the opening four questions through the song of *one* kid purchased for *two* farthings.

Numbers have always played an important role in Jewish thought and experience, beginning with the opening chapters of Genesis when the days of the first week are explicitly counted, through the late kabbalistic-hasidic works, and surprisingly frequently in the Talmudic tradition. The Palestinian Talmud explains that *Sofrim* is the term for Scribes because they arranged the Torah by numbers, and it then gives examples of the use of numbers.¹⁹ No doubt one of the reasons for the use of numbers in the Rabbinic tradition is that, initially, it was an oral tradition and numbers served as a mnemonic device. Yet, even late Medieval thinkers show a concern for numbers that is beyond the need for such devices. The Maharal of Prague, for example, was consistently concerned with number patterns.

In an age of computer machines we have lost a sense of the significance of counting and numbers which, according to Jung, "possess numinosity." It would be well to be aware of this aspect of numbers, since the Seder night is a night of watchfulness, a theme to which we shall return. Jung says something else about numbers which is even more important for our purposes:

Number helps more than anything else to bring order into the chaos of appearances. It is the . . . instrument for creating order, or for apprehending an already existing, but still unknown, regular arrangement or "orderedness."²⁰

As questioning is involved with order, so are numbers involved with order.

VI

The Haggadah is one of the great "audacities of the memory,"²¹ which rejects reenactment in favor of questioning and counting. Yet it is also involved with the eating of matzah, bitter herbs and salt water. The rule is that one is not allowed to eat matzah for many hours and, according to some, for many weeks before the Seder, since one must have a good appetite for the matzah at the Seder. Eating foods is not a dehistoricizing reenactment. Memories, one might say, are eaten.²² It is a way of entering the order. "Biting is certainly getting to the meat of things for participating in the world."²³

19. Tractate *Shekalim*, chp. 5.

20. C. G. Jung, *The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), p. 456.

21. Pierre Emmanuel, *Tombeau d'Orphée*, quoted by Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Reverie* (Boston, 1969), p. 110.

22. Bachelard, *Op. cit.*, p. 141, "I eat memories."

23. *Ibid.*, p. 178.

This history feast is a night time feast. The night is referred to as a night of watchfulness: "It was a night of watching unto the Lord for bringing them out from the land of Egypt; this same night is a night of watching unto the Lord for all the children of Israel throughout their generations" (Exodus 12:42). The timing of the Seder is not incidental, and the initial four questions call attention to this night's difference from all other nights.

The concept of a sacred night is found in various traditions, but to understand this Passover night of watchfulness we must distinguish it from other traditions. The sacred night in Christianity and in Islam are apparently influenced by Jewish tradition, but the relevant contrast is with the sacred night in Buddhism.

In Buddhism on the holy night Buddha received illumination on the banks of the river Neranjara—that is to say, insight into the four noble truths and the path of liberation: "Here I have cut off the briars of passion from the tree of world being with the ax of reflection, and burnt them in the fire of knowledge; the stream of sensual desires has been dried up by the sun of knowledge; here the eye of knowledge, in its purity, was opened for me and the fabric of madness rent; all the fetters of the existence of the world have been loosed for me." Failure to know and to comprehend the noble truths of suffering and its origin, of its suppression, and the way leading to this, is the cause of the "loving and wandering on this long road."²⁴

In Buddhism, then, night gives illumination that the apparently real world is not real. The fetters of existence of the world are loosened so that one might transcend the world.

The tradition of the night of watchfulness in Judaism is in direct opposition; the night of watchfulness makes possible precisely that which Buddha rejected, the wandering on the long road of exile and confronting the real world. The Targum on Exodus 12:42 reflects on nights in Jewish tradition:

Four nights are recorded in the Book of Remembrance which is before the Master of the Universe: the first night when He revealed himself to create the universe; the second when He revealed himself to Abraham; the third when He revealed himself in Egypt; the fourth when He reveals himself to redeem the people of Israel from among the nations. All the nights are called nights of watchfulness.²⁵

According to the Talmud, there are two opinions as to what a night of watchfulness means: one is that it was continuously watched for from the six days of creation; the other is that it is "a night which is under constant protection against evil spirits."²⁶ Most commentaries, as does the Targum, stress the latter interpretation. Moderns who do not take evil spirits seriously can understand this traditional view if they inter-

24. G. van der Leuw, *Religion in Essence and Manifestation* (N. Y., 1963) Vol. II, p. 631.

25. *Targum, Pseudo-Jonathan*.

26. Tractate *Rosh HaShanah*, 11 b.

pret evil spirits as the realm of disorder, or chaos, which threatens order. Seder night, then, the night of order, stands in contrast to, and is protected against, disorders. The night is a night of entering into the order of history.

VII

Staying awake is one of the concerns of the Haggadah. There has been a tradition down through the years that various devices should be used to keep the children alert. The reference to the four sages who stayed up all night talking about the Exodus so that their students had to call them to morning prayers emphasizes this aspect of watchfulness. Both children and adults must remain awake.

The phenomenon of being awake has been studied by Straus, who contrasts it with sleep:

...the sleeper does not withdraw his interest from the world, as Freud said. Going to sleep, we completely surrender to the world, we abandon our stand opposite to it. Therefore, the sleeper is no longer free and able to conduct himself toward the world, to assert himself, and to stand his ground, to hold his own.²⁷

In other words, the sleeper retreats to the purely biological realm, but being "Awake, we find ourselves within the world; we experience ourselves in the world together with the world, in relation to the world."²⁸ In the waking state, says Straus, we meet with others; while "the dreamer is alone in his dream world. No one else can ever enter it, nor can the dreamer leave it."²⁹

The state of being awake for the Seder is involved with being in the world, together with the world, in relationship to the world. The Seder, by stressing wakefulness, stresses freedom. Various devices are used to keep children awake just as the adults, whose model is the four sages, stay awake.

One "reclines" at the Seder. *M'subin*, usually translated "reclining," is a curious word. It is no exemplary gesture, *ab origine*, for the Israelites leaving Egypt did not recline. *M'subin* does not mean *reclining*, for reclining would be a mid-point modality between wakefulness and sleeping. *M'subin* should be understood as seated around, "inclining," bending forward. Inclination brings us closer to another. Inclination, like leaning, means "'bending out' from the austere vetrical."³⁰

The night of watchfulness, then, is a sacred night of being wide awake, of questioning, of a community entering the order of history; truly the history feast par excellence of the world. Thus, the members of the Seder confront the world as a community of free men.

27. "Awakeness," in *Phenomenological Psychology*, p. 115.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 112.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 116.

30. "The Upright Posture," in *Phenomenological Psychology*, p. 145.

*The Centrality of Israel in American Jewish Life: A Sociological Analysis**

CHAIM I. WAXMAN

AMONG THE AIMS OF ZIONISM, AS SET DOWN BY the Jerusalem Program of 1968 and unanimously adopted by the 27th Zionist Congress, is "the centrality of Israel in Jewish life." This essay is an attempt to provide a sociological analysis of that goal as it pertains to American Jewry. The objective herein is not ideological—to state what ought to be, but sociological—to examine what is and why. In essence, what this essay seeks to determine and explain is the extent to which Israel has become central in American Jewish life.

American Jewish life may be viewed from at least two perspectives: objectively, in terms of the communal and institutional structure of American Jewry, and subjectively, in terms of the self-identity, behavior and values of American Jews.¹ We shall look at American Jewry from both of these perspectives to determine the role of Israel in American Jewish life.

When viewed from the objective perspective, it would appear that Israel does, in fact, play a central role in American Jewish life. For example, if one scans the list of "National Jewish Organizations" in the annual *American Jewish Year Book* (AYJB), this is immediately apparent for the majority of them.² Moreover, thirty-five of the largest and most active of the national Jewish organizations are affiliated with the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, for which Zionist and pro-Israel activity is the major emphasis. The Conference of Presidents is housed at 515 Park Avenue in New York City, which is the American headquarters for the Jewish Agency and World Zionist Organization, and the President of the Conference for 1974–75

* This article was written prior to the Nov. 1975 resolution of the United Nations General Assembly condemning Zionism as racism. The extent to which the upsurge of identification with "Zionism" among American Jews will be a long-lasting phenomenon remains to be seen.

1. Marshall Sklare, ed., *The Jewish Community in America* (New York: Behrman House, 1974), p. vii. Cf. my review of David Sidorsky, ed., *The Future of the Jewish Community in America* and of Arnold Dashefsky and Howard Shapiro, *Ethnic Identification Among American Jews*, in *Sociological Analysis*, 36.2 (Summer 1975): 172-174.

2. Cf. *American Jewish Year Book*, Vol. 75, (Philadelphia: JPS, 1974), pp. 603-633. Also see Robert Goldman, "Using the Jewish Establishment—A Reluctant Guide," in Richard Siegel, Michael Strassfeld, Sharon Strassfeld, eds., *The Jewish Catalogue*, (Philadelphia: JPS, 1973), pp. 262-274.

was Rabbi Israel Miller, founder and first president of the American Zionist Federation.

American Jews are unquestionably unique as compared with any other ethnic and/or religious group, and Melvin I. Urofsky has recently described them as they must appear to non-Jewish Americans:

No other ethnic group in American history has so extensive an involvement with a foreign nation; no other nation relies upon a body of private individuals who are neither residents nor citizens of their land to underwrite a major portion of their budget. American Jews buy Israel bonds, give generously to the United Jewish Appeal, lobby governmental representatives to pursue a pro-Israel policy, travel extensively to Israel (where they are greeted by "Welcome Home" signs), respond immediately to every crisis in that part of the world, and yet maintain passionately that they are Americans first and Jews afterward. It is a curious, puzzling, and yet totally logical arrangement...³

As to the logic of the arrangement, we shall have to wait until the last part of our analysis. Insofar as the centrality of Israel in American Jewish organizational life is concerned, Daniel Elazar finds that,

...after 1948, Israel became the major focus of Jewish attention; and since 1967 particularly, insuring the survival of Israel has become the heart of the defense function of the American Jewish community. Even the community-relations agencies are now spending a high proportion of their time and resources trying to increase support for Israel in the United States. As a result, the most important decision-makers in the community are those who are related to the defense of Israel, namely the federation and UJA leadership, voluntary and professional.⁴

Finally, Yakir Eventov and Cvi Rotem, writing in the *Encyclopedia Judaica* on the impact of Israel on United States Jewry in recent years, give the following picture:

American Jews showed themselves more willing and ready to be identified as Jews, to affiliate with Jewish organizations and institutions, and to send their children to Jewish schools as a result of their ties with Israel. Israel occupies an important place in synagogue activities, sermons, and various religious celebrations, and Israel's Independence Day assumes an important place in the American Jewish calendar. The Israel flag is frequently displayed in synagogues and community centers. In many synagogues prayers for the welfare of the State of Israel and world Jewry are recited on Sabbaths and holidays following that for the welfare of the United States. Both the Conservative and Reform branches attempt to establish themselves in Israel through rabbinical schools and various educational programs.

Another impact of Israel has been the use of the Hebrew language in contrast to the decline of Yiddish. Hebrew songs and Israel folk dances have become American Jewish popular culture: at weddings, bar mitzvot, and on many college campuses. Jewish art, which traditionally concentrated on East European themes, expanded to include Israel symbols; Israel

3. Melvin I. Urofsky, *American Zionism from Herzl to the Holocaust* (Garden City, N. Y.: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1975), p. 1.

4. Daniel J. Elazar, "Decision-Making in the American Jewish Community," in Sklare, *Op. cit.*, pp. 103-104.

crafts find a wide market among American Jews. Fiction on Israel life increases rapidly and an extensive periodical literature is directed from Israel institutions toward American Jewry.⁵

It is interesting to observe that, at least on this point, the importance, if not the centrality, of Israel in American Jewish life, there appears to be virtual consensus among American Zionists, non-Zionists, and anti-Zionists. Thus, Joe Stork and Sharon Rose, writing in a journal published in Beirut, attempt to explain why "American Jews universally (sic) embraced Zionism."⁶ Their specific hypotheses and arguments are not as significant as is their agreement with virtually all observers of the American Jewish scene, about Israel's centrality.

However, to comprehend this phenomenon adequately, it is necessary to examine not only the organizational character of American Jews, but, also, their values, behavior, identity and self-identification. When these become our area of focus, we will find the role of Israel to be very different from what may have been deduced from an organizational analysis. When we examine American Jewish life from a subjective perspective, we shall find that American Jews are overwhelmingly pro-Israel, but, at the same time, clearly not Zionist.

While there has been somewhat of a controversy over the question of who is a Zionist, one need not accept the definition of Ben-Gurion that a Zionist is only one who actually goes on *aliyah*, moves to Israel, to accept the distinction between pro-Israeli and Zionist. For the purpose of this essay, "pro-Israeli American Jew" refers to the Jew who lives in the United States and who supports Israel economically, politically, and even emotionally, but whose primary source of Jewish identification is derived from, and oriented to, the American Jewish community. Moreover, the pro-Israeli American Jew perceives and accepts the legitimate cultural and religious autonomy of American Judaism. A Zionist, by contrast, is one who, while not anticipating his own *aliyah* in the near future, for any number of reasons, does, nevertheless, hold *aliyah* to be an ideal. And, a Zionist would consider Israel to be the spiritual and cultural center of Jewry, at least as an ideal if not in fact. In essence, a Zionist is one for whom Israel plays a central role in his own personal life, in his sense of identity and very existence.⁷

The most extensive analysis of Jewish identity in a representative American Jewish community, the "Lakeville" study, was completed prior to the Six Day War. The data there indicate variations of pro-Israeli sentiment in both generational terms and in terms of religious inheri-

5. *Encyclopedia Judaica* (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1971), Vol. 16, p. 1147.

6. Joe Stork and Sharon Rose, "Zionism and American Jewry," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 11, Vol. III, No. 3 (Spring 1974): 39-57.

7. This distinction between pro-Israeli and Zionist derives from a personal discussion with Professor Simon L. Herman of the Institute for the Study of Contemporary Jewry, Hebrew University, Jerusalem.

tance.⁸ The vast distinction between Zionist and pro-Israel sentiment, according to our definitions, is clearly seen, for while 91% of the respondents approved of American Jews raising money for Israel, only 14% felt that Israeli financial needs take precedence over local Jewish causes, and only 1% would consider becoming citizens of Israel or encouraging their children to emigrate to Israel.⁹

In conjunction with his study on Reconstructionism,¹⁰ in 1969, Charles Liebman queried Orthodox, Conservative and Reform rabbis and synagogue presidents, and the presidents of their respective national Jewish organizations about a series of statements relating to Jewish religious ideology. Among them were several on Israel, and the results are significant.¹¹ With the statement, "A Jew who really wants to do what Judaism requires of him should move to Israel," all of the groups, except the Orthodox rabbis, disagreed. Using our definition of a Zionist as one to whom *aliyah* is an ideal, Liebman's data confirm, therefore, that virtually all of the religious and lay *leadership* of American Jewry are non-Zionist. Moreover, this was evident not only from the statement on *aliyah*, but, also, from the statement, "While there must be a warm fraternal relation between Jews of the USA and Israel, the center of American Jewish life must be *American* Judaism rather than a Jewish culture which has developed or will develop in the State of Israel." Conservative and Reform rabbis and lay leaders agreed with this statement; only both Orthodox groups disagreed.¹² Finally, with the statement, "Israel should become the spiritual center of World Jewry," Reform rabbis and lay leaders disagreed overwhelmingly, Conservative less so, and Orthodox least.¹³ If these were the responses from the religious and lay leaders of American Judaism, it does not seem unreasonable to suggest that the masses would hold to beliefs which are even less Zionist.

In 1970-1, Leonard Fein directed a study of membership in Reform temples that contains pertinent data regarding attitudes toward Israel.

8. Marshall Sklare and Joseph Greenblum, *Jewish Identity on the Suburban Frontier* (New York: Basic Books, 1967), pp. 241-249.

9. Ibid, Table 6-3, p. 225.

10. Charles S. Liebman, "Reconstructionism in American Jewish Life," *AJYB*, Vol. 71, 1970, pp. 3-93; reprinted in Charles S. Liebman, *Aspects of the Religious Behaviour of American Jews* (N.Y.: KTAV Pub. House, 1974), pp. 189-285.

11. Yesha'yahu (Charles) Liebman, "The Role of Israel in the Ideology of American Jews," *Dispersion and Unity*, 10 (Winter 1970): Tables 6 and 7, pp. 25-26. The percentage breakdown on the statement that Jews should move to Israel was as follows: Orthodox rabbis—69% agreed; Conservative rabbis—25%; Reform rabbis—10%; Orthodox synagogue presidents—37%; Conservative—12%; Reform—5%. It should be pointed out that Liebman's sample of Orthodox rabbis was derived from membership in the Rabbinical Council of America and, thus, the responses may not be representative of all Orthodox rabbis. For example, the minority which identifies with the Satmar and Neturei Kartah ideology vis-a-vis both Israel and Zionism are clearly not represented in this sample.

12. Ibid., p. 23.

13. Ibid., 24.

Whereas both adults and youth rated the relationship of American Jews to Israel as very important, only 28% of them agreed with the statement, "Israel is the center of contemporary American Jewish life."¹⁴ Likewise, among adults, 38% thought it essential, and 45% thought it desirable to support Israel as part of being a "good Jew;" only 13% thought it essential, and 31% desirable, to support Zionism.¹⁵ Fein emphasizes the increases in the numbers indicating support for both Israel and Zionism as compared to Sklare's Reform Lakeville respondents, and he is unquestionably correct that at least some of that increase was a result of the Six Day War. There is, however, reason to question whether this trend has persisted, or, possibly, was reversed as a result of the Yom Kippur War. The reasons for this doubt will be discussed below. Be that as it may, Fein's data reveal that 13% of the adults and 9% of the youth in his sample felt that support for Zionism was an essential component of being a "good Jew." Furthermore, when the youth population was broken down into college and Confirmation class students, Fein's data show sharp differences in their responses. On the statement of Israel as the center, 37% of the Confirmation class agreed, whereas among college youth 20% agreed. Similarly, on the support for Zionism, 48% of the Confirmation class youth found it essential or desirable, whereas among college youth 32% found it essential or desirable. Put differently, 67% of the college youth found support for Zionism either irrelevant or unessential to being a good Jew, and 80% were undecided or disagreed with the statement that Israel is the center of contemporary Jewish life.¹⁶

In still another study, by Dashefsky and Shapiro, of the ethnic identity of middle class Jewish males in St. Paul, Minnesota, there were a number of questions designed to measure the respondents' Zionism. They report:

There were . . . differences in the strength of Zionism between fathers and sons . . . Fathers were more likely than sons to score higher on our Index of Zionism. This finding reflects the greater assimilation of the younger generation, who are more likely to unequivocally view America as the homeland rather than Israel. Perhaps the difference between the generations would have been greater but for the fact that the Six Day War had occurred less than two years earlier. The crisis of the spring of 1967 had a great impact on all generations of American Jewry, generating both an outpouring of financial contributions and young volunteers.¹⁷

14. Leonard J. Fein, et al., *Reform is a Verb* (New York: UAHC, 1972), p. 66.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 67.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 71.

17. Arnold Dashefsky and Howard Shapiro, *Ethnic Identification among American Jews* (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books/D. C. Heath and Co., 1974), p. 46. Their "Index of Zionism" was composed of five statements covering such matters as the learning of Hebrew, consideration of living in Israel, the importance of Israel's remaining a "Jewish State," desire to visit Israel, and Israel as the spiritual homeland of the Jewish people. See Table A-2, p. 139.

To recapitulate, all of the available data support the argument that the "Zionism" of American Jews is, actually, a pro-Israel sentiment whose sources have been discussed by many observers.¹⁸ At this juncture it is important to point out that American Jewish sentiment is overtly pro-Israel because this sentiment has been seen as being consistent and compatible with the identification of American Jews as *Americans*. This was precisely the manner in which Justice Louis D. Brandeis, the "father" of American Zionism, defined Zionism. In an address delivered in June, 1915, he sought to calm those who feared that their pro-Palestine activity might put their loyalty to America in question:

Let no American imagine that Zionism is inconsistent with Patriotism. Multiple loyalties are objectionable only if they are inconsistent. A man is a better citizen of the United States for being also a loyal citizen of his state, and of his city; for being loyal to his family, and to his profession or trade; for being loyal to his college or his lodge. Every Irish American who contributed towards advancing home rule was a better man and a better American for the sacrifice he made. Every American Jew who aids in advancing the Jewish settlement in Palestine, *though he feels that neither he nor his descendants will ever live there*, will likewise be a better man and a better American for doing so.¹⁹

Brandeis went even further and declared that American Jews had a patriotic obligation to support "Zionism," because the American ideal and law of the fundamental brotherhood of man is rooted in that "Jewish fundamental law." "There is no inconsistency between loyalty to America and loyalty to Jewry . . .," he declared. "Indeed loyalty to America demands rather that each American Jew become a Zionist."²⁰

Norman Podhoretz was essentially echoing Brandeis' views when, after the Yom Kippur War of 1973, he declared the "instant Zionism" of American Jews. "If Zionism means supporting the idea of a sovereign Jewish state in Palestine," (he wrote) "then most American Jews have been Zionists at least since the end of World War II."²¹ Then, after the Yom Kippur War, he argued, "many who were formerly hostile or indifferent to Israel have . . . either become Zionists or simply faded away."²² The opposition to Jewish sovereignty in Israel has all but disappeared because the State of Israel is an accomplished fact; because American Jews remember the Holocaust and retain a "hidden apocalyptic terror;" and, most importantly, according to Podhoretz, because the fear of a conflict between dual loyalties has never materialized since, by and large, support for Israel has been quite consistent with

18. Cf. Marshall Sklare, *America's Jews* (New York: Random House, 1971), Chapter 7, pp. 210-223.

19. Louis D. Brandeis, *Brandeis on Zionism* (Washington, D. C.: Zionist Organization of America, 1942), p. 29, (emphasis added).

20. *Ibid.*

21. Norman Podhoretz, "Now, Instant Zionism," *New York Times Magazine*, (February 3, 1974): 11.

22. *Ibid.*

American foreign policy.²³ Given his conception of Zionism, Podhoretz may be basically correct, with, however, at least some qualification. While he may be right in his contention that the majority of American Jews support the sovereignty of Israel, the available data indicate that he is grossly overestimating when he writes that, "... a full 99% of them have now become Zionists," and when he proclaims "the universal (sic) need to do something, anything, for Israel."²⁴

The preliminary evidence which Arnulf Pins recently presented indicates that the reactions of American Jews to the Yom Kippur War were quite different from those to the Six Day War. One of the major ones was that, whereas in 1967 many American Jews "rediscovered their Jewishness, were suddenly 'turned on' to Israel, and began to identify with the new image of the Jew as represented by the strong and successful Israel," the same reaction did not happen to any large degree in 1973,²⁵ one important reason being that the 1973 war was seen as having negative consequences for the United States. The consistency between loyalty to America and pro-Israel sentiment was no longer clearly present, and there are indications that there was a decline in pro-Israel sentiment. Since the primary source of identification for most American Jews is with America, it is understandable that many of those who define the situation as one in which they must choose between loyalty to America and loyalty to Israel would choose the former. It should be emphasized that what is being dealt with is only that group which defines the situation as one of inconsistent and even conflicting loyalties; in 1973 the majority of American Jews perceived no such inconsistency and did, in fact, overtly support Israel.

If the phenomenon were limited to political loyalties and strictly political nationalisms, then it should be quite understandable why American Jews are so overwhelmingly pro-Israel and yet adamantly loyal Americans. But the data presented imply that there is more at issue. It appears that the centrality of Israel in American Jewish life is a function of the centrality of *Jewish* identity in American Jewish life; that is, the stronger the identity of the American Jew as a Jew, the greater the likelihood that Israel will play a central role in his life.²⁶ This hypothesis requires an elaboration on the subject of Jewish identity and we would contend that an understanding of Jewish identity in America would be enhanced if it were viewed within the context of the initially Western processes of bureaucratization-secularization-modernization, in general, and Jewish Emancipation in particular.

23. *Ibid.*, pp. 42-44.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 42.

25. Arnulf M. Pins, "Impact of the Yom Kippur War on American Jewry," *Dispersion and Unity*, 21/22 (1973/74): 69.

26. This implication underlies Sklare's entire chapter in the "Lakeville" study.

Following the approach of Peter Berger, a sociologist of religion, one of the unique characteristics of modern society is that the individual does not live within one unified social world, but in a "plurality of life-worlds,"²⁷ which manifests itself, for example, in the sharp dichotomy between his public and his private life. Not only does he play different roles in these two spheres; there may even be completely different definitions of reality appropriate within each of them. Moreover, within each sphere, too, there is an ongoing pluralization. Now it is important to realize that at the same time that this pluralization of life-worlds makes the individual more "sophisticated," more "broad minded," and more "urbane," it also results in his having a less clear, less concrete and less plausible "home world."²⁸ His own definitions of reality become relativized and, as a consequence, less firm. His identity becomes "peculiarly open," "peculiarly differentiated," "peculiarly reflective," and "peculiarly individuated."²⁹ Since the various social worlds in which he lives becomes relativized, reality becomes subjective rather than objective, and the freedom and rights of the individual take on priority in the value system.

The pluralization of modern society and the compartmentalization of definitions and reality have resulted in the growing tendency toward secularization. This secularization does not necessarily imply a disbelief in some conception of a supreme being, and the hypothesis of the tendency toward the secularization of modern society is in no way refuted by the evidence supporting the argument that modern man continues to believe in some kind of deity.³⁰ Secularization, as defined by Berger, is

... the process by which sectors of society and culture are removed from the domination of religious institutions and culture... When we speak of culture and symbols... we imply that secularization is more than a social-structural process. It affects the totality of cultural life and of ideation... Moreover, it is implied here that the process of secularization has a subjective side as well. As there is secularization of society and culture, so there is secularization of consciousness. Put simply, this means that the modern West has produced an increasing number of individuals who look upon the world and their own lives without the benefit of religious interpretations.³¹

On an institutional level, secularization clearly manifests itself in the separation of religion from the spheres of the state and the economy. The very notion that "religion leaves off at the front gate," or that there is, and should be, separation of religion and state would have been totally alien and incomprehensible to pre-modern man precisely

27. Peter L. Berger, Brigitte Berger, and Hansfried Kellner, *The Homeless Mind* (New York: Random House, 1973), p. 64.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 67.

29. *Ibid.*, pp. 77-79.

30. Cf. Andrew M. Greeley, *Unsecular Man* (New York: Schocken Books, 1972).

31. Peter L. Berger, *The Sacred Canopy* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1966), pp. 107-108.

because religion posited an all-encompassing world-view with all-encompassing definitions of reality. But, for modern man, social life is compartmentalized, and religion "has its place" within but one of those compartments or sectors. The modern state is a-religious and the Western conception of nationality is conceived of as being neutral to religion. Bureaucracy and rationalization require that the criterion for evaluation in the political and, especially, in the economic spheres be efficiency. Religion and politics do not mix, nor do religion and economic activity. Religion is restricted to very specific times and places, which grow increasingly narrow.

For the individual, the pluralization and compartmentalization of modern society result in personal problems. Anton Zijderveld avers that because of pluralization the individual must develop a pluralistic identity, he must constantly be able to change identities, causing a gap between himself and his roles. Society becomes "abstract," and the individual loses his sense of who he really is.³² Berger, Berger and Kellner summarized this condition quite succinctly when they wrote, "modern man has suffered from a deepening condition of 'homelessness.'"³³ This loss of "home," they suggest, is psychologically difficult, and "has therefore engendered its own nostalgias—nostalgias, that is, for a condition of 'being at home' in society, with oneself and, ultimately, in the universe."³⁴

This situation presents problems of identity for members of Western society in general, and, in addition, results in specific problems for the Jew in terms of Jewish identity. Some of these will be discussed shortly. At this juncture it may be hypothesized that the pro-Israel sentiment of American Jews is, in large degree, an attempt to fill the gap of homelessness as discussed. That is, the American Jewish identification with Israel is essentially a nostalgic longing for "the home." As Liebman argues, Israel has importance for some American Jews as a "*heim* . . ." a Yiddish word whose literal meaning is "home" with all the connotations of warmth and security and with all the nostalgia that surround the concept "home." Its meaning may be captured more accurately if it is translated "the old home."³⁵ What is important in terms of our distinction between pro-Israel and Zionist is that in the context of this nostalgic longing, the "home" can in no way be seen as playing a central role in one's life. Liebman is definitive on this:

Now, the characteristic of the *heim*, . . . is that one doesn't live there. It is the parents' home, or in the case of Israel the surrogate parents' or

32. Anton C. Zijderveld, *The Abstract Society* (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1971), p. 72.

33. Berger, et al., *The Homeless Mind*, p. 82.

34. Ibid.

35. Charles S. Liebman, *The Ambivalent American Jew* (Philadelphia: JPS, 1973), p. 105.

surrogate grandparents' home. One visits it on occasion, one sends money (without ever having the bad taste to inquire how that money is spent) and one wants very much to feel that life goes on there as it always has . . . This type of Jew is more likely to be indignant at any public criticism of Israel and takes a particular delight in how old fashioned or quaint he imagines Israel to be. This is the Jew who is quite certain he would be completely at home in Israel, though he knows very little about the country and makes no special effort to learn anything.³⁶

Whereas Liebman attributes this nostalgic longing for the *heim* primarily to poor, elderly American Jews, we would argue that, for the bulk of "homeless" American Jews, their pro-Israel sentiment is rooted in this nostalgia for "the home."³⁷

In addition to its effects upon man and society, in general, modernization, through its corollary, Emancipation, has had particular consequences for Jews as a collectivity as well as for the individual Jew. On the one hand, Emancipation meant that Jews were relieved of their legal status as "strangers" and were accepted as full-fledged citizens with the same rights and duties as others. On the other hand, the effect of this historic achievement was to set in motion the process of pluralization and compartmentalization discussed above. From the purview of the state, "religion" was now a private matter. But, for Jews, the acceptance of this distinction between the public-state and private-religious spheres was a radical leap, since until that point Judaism had never considered the implication that there was a range of binding norms and values beyond those of Judaism itself. This break with tradition found expression not only among secularists, such as Yehudah Leib Gordon (1831-1892) who has the dubious distinction of having advocated that one should be "a Jew at home and a man in the street," but also among religionists as well. As Nathan Rotenstreich points out,

[E]ven for what might be called modern Orthodox Jews, as represented by Samson Raphael Hirsch, the distinction between *Torah* and *derech eretz*—*Torah* as Jewish Law and *derech eretz* as general normative moral guidance—connotes not only a compromise, but also an acknowledgement that there exists, outside the Jewish boundaries, a binding and meaningful realm of human behavior.³⁸

36. Ibid., p. 106.

37. It was precisely within this context that the former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, Arthur Goldberg, rejected the accusations made by Syrian Ambassador Tomeh that American Jews were guilty of dual loyalty because of their support for Israel. Goldberg responded that in the United States attachment to one's "ancestral home" is not taken as "a sign of double loyalty or lack of attachment to our American institution." He then made reference to President John F. Kennedy's visit to his ancestral home and the extent to which that trip was applauded. Thus, according to Goldberg, American Jewish support for Israel is part of an attachment to the ancestral home, and is comparable to President Kennedy's attachment to Ireland. Press Release USUN-81, June 6, 1967, p. 8.

38. Nathan Rotenstreich, "Emancipation and its Aftermath," in David Sidorsky, ed., *The Future of the Jewish Community in America* (New York and Philadelphia: Basic Books/JPS 1974), p. 47.

Judaism, thus, became increasingly relevant only within the private sphere.

The separation of the private and public spheres led, as Berger has shown, to religious demonopolization,³⁹ and a situation in which religion is a matter of personal preference. In the United States, for example, it is "the religion of your choice." Moreover, from an institutional point of view, Judaism in the United States followed the dominant pattern of Protestant denominationalism, and has produced at least three "branches" of Judaism, each with a rather broad right-left continuum. From the standpoint of the individual Jew, this situation provides him with the "freedom" to choose the particular legitimate brand of Jewish identification and expression with which he feels most comfortable. But, for institutionalized Judaism, it has set in motion a process of religious free-enterprise which Berger finds analogous to the economic market situation:

The religious tradition, which previously could be authoritatively imposed, now has to be *marketed*. It must be "sold" to a clientele that is no longer constrained to "buy." The pluralistic situation is, above all, a *market condition*. In it, the religious institutions become marketing agencies and the religious traditions become consumer commodities. And at any rate a good deal of religious activity comes to be dominated by the logic of market economics.⁴⁰

Moreover, for the individual as well, while he now has the benefit of being able to choose his particular variety of Judaism, there are, at the same time, severe consequences in terms of establishing a Jewish identity. Isador Chein, a psychologist of New York University, has pointed to a number of these problems, especially for the Jewish child:

We first note that the Jewish child faces a diversification of Jewish points of view, and a fractionalization of the Jewish community to a degree that never confronted his grandparents. There are contending interpretations of the Jewish religion... For better or for worse, there is no longer a single model of Jewishness. It is not surprising, therefore, that even many adult Jews, to say nothing of the children, are hard pressed when asked for a more-than-glib characterization of what they mean when they say they are Jewish... We next note a second aspect...: the reduced scope of Jewishness. There was a time when Jewishness permeated virtually every moment of one's existence... This all-pervasiveness of Jewishness no longer exists... One by-product is the tendency for the psychological isolation of Jewishness, its restriction to an island in the personal life space... Hence the more circumscribed does Jewishness become, the less meaningful does it also become... And yet another aspect of the narrowed scope of Jewishness: the more it becomes identified with certain activities at certain times, the greater is the tendency to experience one's identity as a Jew only in those activities and at those times. Jewishness becomes a sort of role that one plays, and one is only a Jew while playing this role.⁴¹

It is, apparently, because of the fact that Jewishness is a role which

39. Berger, *The Sacred Canopy*, pp. 130ff.

40. Ibid., p. 138.

41. Isidor Chein, "The Problem of Jewish Identification," *Jewish Social Studies*, XVII, 3 (1955): 219-220.

one experiences when playing that role that there is a stronger sense of Jewish identity and that Israel plays a much more central role among Orthodox Jews, as was seen in the Liebman and Sklare studies. There are countless more moments in the everyday life of the Orthodox Jew when he "plays the role" of Jew. It is interesting to note that the Zionism of Orthodox Jews, both in Israel and in the Diaspora, was the subject of an article by the well-known Israeli satirist, Ephraim Kishon, who is himself non-Orthodox:

The first sign came from abroad back in the six-and-half fat years. The Israeli traveller discovered, much to his satisfaction, that world Jewry lavished praise and sympathy on the Jewish State in its days of glory, and many even went so far as to call themselves Zionists. To be precise, the parents were Zionists, the children weren't. When they, the children, were Zionists as well, you didn't even have to scratch them to find a religious family. Those are the ones who study Hebrew as a matter of principle, who send their kids to Jerusalem out of a 2,000-year-old urge—in the lean years as well as in the fat.⁴²

For the majority of American Jews, however, Jewishness and Jewish identity are limited to infrequent intervals, their identity in general is rather abstract, and, thus, Israel does not really play any central role in their lives.

* * *

While the objective of this essay has been no more than to elucidate a particular sociological phenomenon, the foregoing analysis would seem to suggest policy implications for those involved in Zionist social action and who strive to make a reality out of the Zionist goal of "the centrality of Israel in Jewish life." In 1974, I presented a paper at the Third Biennial Convention of the American Zionist Federation in which I pointed to a number of deficiencies in the quality of Jewish life in Israel, and concluded that "we can achieve 'the centrality of Israel in Jewish life' only when we achieve the centrality of Jewish life in Israel."⁴³ Having reexamined Jewish life and Jewish identity in Israel both in person and through a number of studies, I am persuaded that Jewish identity in Israel is relatively firm and concrete, and that the non-centrality of Israel in American Jewish life is virtually unrelated to the quality of Jewish life in Israel. On the contrary, it is precisely among Orthodox American Jews, whom one would expect to be most critical of what they see as deficiencies in the Jewish character of Israel, that Israel is, in fact, most central. The reason for this, it would appear, is that it is this group of American Jews which has the strongest sense of Jewish identity, because Jewishness plays a more central role

42. Ephraim Kishon, "The Knitted Skullcap" (*Kipah S'rugah*), *Ma'ariv*, February 21, 1975, translated by Miriam Arad for *The Jerusalem Post*. Same Date.

43. Chaim I. Waxman, "The Centrality of Israel in Jewish Life," in *The Zionist Program for Today and Tomorrow* (New York: American Zionist Federation, 1975), p. 39.

in their lives.⁴⁴ If this is the case, it follows that to make Israel central in American Jewish life one cannot expect any significant and tangible results from various attempts artificially to transplant aspects of Israeli culture into American Jewish culture. On this point we would agree with Eugene Borowitz, that for all of their emotional attachments to Israel, American Jews "cannot function as Jews by trying to live a vicarious Israeli existence on American soil."⁴⁵ Rather, we would conclude that the sound approach in this case is the indirect approach, namely, that Zionists work to strengthen Jewish identity by helping to strengthen Jewish life in America, because, as we have seen, the stronger one's Jewish identity, the more likely is a stronger identification with Israel. For example, the strengthening of Jewish education in the United States need not be a task only for American Jews, who frequently experience a conflict between their desire to contribute to American Jewish education and their desire to strengthen Israel. These two objectives are not at all mutually exclusive, and we would suggest that it would not be unreasonable to expect even representatives of the State of Israel to come to the United States and rally for the cause of Jewish education just as they rally for Israel Bonds, the United Jewish Appeal, and *aliyah*. The old Zionist approach of *shlilat ha-golah*, denigrating the Diaspora, in the sense of undermining the Jewish institutions in the Diaspora, has proven to be counterproductive. On the contrary, the strengthening of Jewish life and Jewish identity in the Diaspora will lead to a strengthening of the bonds between the Diaspora and Israel and will place Israel in a more central position in world Jewish life.

It was with this approach that Kishon implied concurrence when he wrote: "Embarrassing as it may be, you feel as if this anachronism of eating kosher and keeping the Sabbath automatically guaranteed a true love for Zion that doesn't depend on Zion's winning a war."⁴⁶ He may have been taking literary license when he stated it as a guarantee, but the data and our analysis do suggest a very strong probability.

44. When we speak of "Orthodox American Jews," we are referring to the main-stream, typified as those who belong to synagogues affiliated with the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations and whose rabbis are members of the Rabbinical Council of America. Of course, there are many who do not fit this picture. It should be noted, however, that even among those Orthodox Jews who, for religio-political reasons, would not call themselves Zionists, there are many who are strong Zionists (with a small z), in the sense that they have a great love for the land and people of Israel, and, in this respect, they should not be equated with secular non-Zionists or anti-Zionists. In both cases, it should be emphasized, we are dealing with representative factions, and the existence of fringe movements does not detract from our central argument.

45. Eugene B. Borowitz, *The Mask Jews Wear* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1973), p. 163.

46. Kishon, *Op. cit.*

Gabriel Preil: *A Hebrew Poet in America*

DAVID RUDAVSKY

WITH HIS FOUR PUBLISHED VOLUMES OF HEBREW poetry and a fifth composite collection to his credit, Gabriel Preil has won his laurels as a Hebrew poet, one of the few recognized Hebrew poets remaining on the American scene; an older colleague, Eisig Silberschlag, devotes himself to outside activities as well. There have, of course, been others, like Shimon Halkin, Israel Efros and Abraham Regelson, who have settled in Israel. Still others, among them Moshe Feinstein, Efraim Lisitsky, Hillel Bavli, Benjamin Silkiner, A. S. Schwartz, Aaron Zeitlin and, recently, also Reuven Avinoam (Grossman), have passed away. American Jewry, notwithstanding its substantial network of Jewish day schools and higher institutions of Hebraic and Judaic learning, as well as its secular colleges and universities sponsoring such programs, has produced few readers of serious Hebrew literature and less than a handful of Hebrew writers to replace those of the dwindling East European immigrant generation.

Towards the end of his days, Judah Leib Gordon (1830–92), a leading poet of the Russian *haskalah* (Enlightenment) posed the question: “For whom am I toiling?” Almost a century later, Preil could repeat this question, though, in reality, he is more fortunate, since he does not depend on an American readership. It is significant that only his first volume, *Nof Shemesh Ukfor* (Landscape of Sun and Frost) was published in the United States (1945). The other books were put out by prestigious publishing houses in Israel.

Preil’s first collection was welcomed by some of the outstanding poets of the *yishuv*: Ya’kov Cahan, Yizhak Lamdan, Sh. Shalom, as well as by Leah Goldberg and others of her generation. A decade later, and in following years, younger groups of Hebrew poets, exponents of new ideas of poetic imagery and form, acclaimed Preil’s subsequent collections of verse, perhaps the only American Hebrew poetry to be so received. In America, the renowned poet, Hillel Bavli (1893–1961), was among the first to acknowledge Preil’s poetic gifts. So was Shimon Halkin and, also, the eminent American Yiddish poet, essayist and novelist, Jacob Glatstien (1896–1971).

Preil came to America from Mariampol in Lithuania in 1922 at the age of eleven. He attended New York City public schools and later studied

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at Yeshiva University. Though he has lived all but the early years of his life in New York City, he regards Israel as his spiritual home. Perhaps the well known line from the great medieval lover of Zion, Yehuda Halevi, "My heart is in the East, though I am in the outermost West," can apply to Preil. In "Witnesses," he confirms his longing for the Jewish homeland. Here, as in so much of his other verse, Preil veils his basic thought in concise symbol and metaphor:

This snow which so insipidly melts in my veins,
This reason flickering like a wavering candle,
This dream touched by the dust of sobriety—
Were all of them witnesses that for me the birthland waits.

A dream already invades the alluring land,
A snow aspires to blue love in the bosom of Kinnereth,
And reason pursues Elijah's chariot in a storm ascending.

Another poem, "The Two," begins with a simple assertion: "I live in New York and shall yet reside in a city in Israel." In the idiom and style of the Hebrew prophets of old, he gives expression, in "Confession to My Land," to a vision—a mystic illumination in the course of which he hears a voice reproving him for living amidst alien cultures:

And it was then I dwelt in the city of Brooklyn in the month of Ziv,*
In the tenth year of the State of Israel,
A shadow descended upon me from ambush, a cloud darkening my noons.
For I was intensely preoccupied with foreign colors, and ending my days
Not aware of the one redemption awaiting and expecting me
In a land that has not as yet absorbed the echo of my footsteps, yet
Frees my blind dreams and impels me to return to my true source.

After the Six Day War, the poet extolled Israel's triumph in "Miraculous Things: 1967":

In the small Jewish East
Surged waves of lions
Covering shores like fire
Reaching levels of concepts
Which froze like mountains,
Forsaken in books.

From now on
As if dwarfed
The great alien West
Will no longer unleash upon us
The dogs of loneliness.

Waves of lions are surging.

Then, Preil visited Israel in '68 as a guest of the Jerusalem municipality, and was inspired by what he saw there. He caught the spirit of Jerusalem, the holy city, where prophets had once roamed, thundering

* Ziv, literally "brightness," refers to the month of Iyyar, roughly corresponding to May.

words of exhortation and admonition to their people. In this city the past and present have been linked in a long chain of history and tradition. The old and new converge and merge there in a unified context, of which he speaks in his "First Poem from Jerusalem":

Under these historic skies
I am older than Abraham and his Stars. I,
The very youthful father of the children,
Who play among the pinkish trees.

And on an afternoon in Alharizi Street
There peers from an arched frame
An hour of unique grace, like that which surely
Once whispered to the prophet weary
Of fire and dreaming of a village
Cool among the stars.

The bright, orange-yellow full moon of Jerusalem spreads a festive radiance over the city. The poet embraces this mood:

In the great city
Of sleeping kings
I wake with the moon,
The only piece of bread
In my great hunger,
The meaning perhaps of this festivity.

Israel is one of numerous themes in Preil's poetry, which represents, in the main, a lyrical response to his times and experiences. It should perhaps be noted that Preil's Hebrew medium does not necessarily determine the content of his poems, which are not essentially nationalistic or even Jewish in essence. Actually, they are humanistic and of a universal character. His verse may be described as biographical, since the major events and episodes occurring in his life influenced its subject matter. He has lived through the throes of war and destruction, through the Nazi holocaust and the mass slaughter of millions of Jews. In the wake of this cataclysm, there followed the momentous creation of the State of Israel after two terror-filled millenia of Jewish homelessness. Then came the atomic catastrophe of Nagasaki and Hiroshima which introduced to the world a new and more deadly weapon of warfare and annihilation. The savagery of this era marked a breakdown in human values that threatened the collapse of Western civilization. All of these affected the poet and his verse.

Preil is a modernist. The bulk of his verse consists of short, pithy lines, cast in free verse akin to prose. He is far more concerned with the substance of his verse than with its form. He is an individualist who disregards conventional patterns and poetic structure, and composes in subtle, unrhymed lines that possess an inner music and cadence of their own. Moreover, Preil subserves language to his own purposes and does not permit it to dominate him. His words express inner images, thoughts

or sentiments. Because these are of so intimate and subjective a nature, he often finds it appropriate to write in the first person.

II

Preil is attuned to the existential condition of man, which may account for the distinctly pessimistic strain that runs through his verse, a sense of the human tragedy, its gloom and loneliness. His temperament is that of the author of *Koheleth*, (*Ecclesiastes*) which, in Jewish tradition, is associated with the autumnal season of the year, the season marked by severe change. It is, moreover, the harbinger of winter, the symbol of death and extinction. Preil accordingly depicts the destruction of European Jewry in the poem entitled "My Brethren's Autumn." Elsewhere he speaks of life in this vein and declares: "Know that the story of your life is writ in autumnal script," an allusion to human existence as a chain of anguish and sorrow. He is ever conscious of life, as the Chinese aphorism puts it, as "the great prevailing disorder under heaven." Even in the springtime, the season of hope and renewal, the poet cannot forget fleeting time and the "flames ridiculing disaster,"—the nuclear destruction that threatens mankind.

In his "The Ninetenth Century," Preil speaks of himself as "not necessarily a romanticist who crosses a silken garden in a chariot harnessed to eagle horses," but he does glorify the past and asserts that the nineteenth century, despite its folly and iniquity, was a relatively good and compassionate age. However, the depravity of his own twentieth century "is redder than scarlet and its wisdom is the sophistication of Abaddon." The poet is often drawn to the past and to the scenes and events of his childhood in his native Lithuania. In "Six Days of Autumn" he recalls that "now that the American woodlands have been tinted with the shades of young autumn, those of Lithuania are floating through clouds of an ancient winter." While "the seasons [here] have sprinkled me with showers of leaves and a hail of snow," he yearns "for the grasslands of his birth land, whose hoary age sings of an unchanging youth."

The poet's nostalgia for the rich Jewish life of his *shtetl* is expressed in "Gabriel the Martyr." Here he conjures up the figure of a namesake, a sort of alter ego, who perished in the holocaust that wiped out East European Jewry. This Gabriel was a pious, learned Jew, at peace with himself and the world, "who tasted the wine of God from oceans and small flasks." While the saintly Gabriel sought and attained great spiritual heights, Gabriel the poet was abandoned and left alone "on a rocky and desolate isle." The fate of the former Gabriel symbolizes the destruction of the poet's old home and its milieu. Yet, despite his display of romanticist tendencies in this, as in other poems, Preil claims to be a realist "who affirms hard facts on a fragile table."

The title of Preil's volume of verse, "Of Time and Place," suggests the two principal pivots around which his poems revolve. In more prosaic terms, these may be referred to as the time-space continuum which can be said to embrace not only the physical, but, also, the metaphysical world. The poet paints a wide range of subjects with a highly sensitive brush, replete with delicate nuance. He lives among the "rage and whisper of colors" as he puts it; in fact, Preil has been acclaimed as the outstanding colorist in Hebrew poetry. In this respect, he may be said to be close to the Anglo-American Imagist school, which maintains that a poet's verse should be hard, clear and free of stilted and artificial language and imagery.

Not only does the poet reproduce the colors of the external, visible landscape, but, also, the inner, invisible one of heart and mind. He describes the leafy green of the trees in the spring, the grey of winter, the somber color of frustration, the melancholy hues of anguish and the hazy shades of memory. The snow arouses in him a feeling of loneliness:

Your song, O snow, your song of white change is perhaps more fixed
and firm
Than the granite isles in a wine-clouded sea;
But you are more solitary than they—
And I still lonelier than you.

(Sketches of Maine)

Death, too, has its color—blacker than black. Death, the inexorable fate and destiny of all, is, of course, an inescapable reality. Yet the poet cannot reconcile himself to this basic fact of existence. To him, death is the self-evident opposite of life. It cancels life, and why life, if it is consumed by death? The two are mutually contradictory:

How shall I give praise to the bright-eyed garden-god,
To the cherry tree drunk with a red dream,
When in chambers blacker than black, men sleep
And silently, voicelessly declare:
"You, too, will be like bright skinned fruit, brimming with drunkenness
Until one day the fall, until one moment, extinction.
You too. . . ."

One day also I.

(How Shall I Give Praise)

But there is a glaring distinction between the life of man and that of the tree, as referred to in the Hebrew Scriptures (Job 14:7ff). When spring comes, the tree, defying death, returns to life, but the man who tended it is dead and gone, never to return. The fruit of the resurrected tree rises in a mighty protest against the ravages of death:

The cherry tree became red again
But the old man who last year gave me a taste of it
Is no more.
Its fruit is blacker this summer
My fruit grows blacker, too.

If the tree sensed the old man's absence
 I know not.
 But this is certain: This year its fruit rises
 In a defiant, howling flame
 Against the night of death, avowing
 Life's recurring colors.
 And would that the last sweeping tempest
 Cleansing our bones
 Be like the summer that storms
 Its golden glory for ever.

(Concerning the Cherry Tree)

The drama of death is presented in a burial scene, and we see its divergent colors around the open grave. The red shirt of the grave digger is ablaze in the sun. This is the outer scape. But there is also an inner one: the bewilderment and sadness of the mourners gathered around the gaping hole:

The blouse of the grave digger
 Reddened in the sun,
 His boots were blackened
 Against the white snow:
 As if for the first time
 Day turned to night,
 The earth, as if before then,
 Did not open its mouth so--
 And the mourners, like children astounded
 Stood before a fact of time.
 The blouse of the grave digger reddens
 And their blood turns to snow.

(This, The First Time)

Death may threaten the old and weak, but the concept of age is merely relative:

He was old when he was buried,
 The rain, falling on his grave,
 Saw him as very young, as a child.
 The tears falling on his mound
 Were as ancient as eternity, as the days of man.

(He Was Old)

Life is a passing nightmare, and the poet seeks its meaning in the riddle of death. Is it only a process of oxidation, a purposeless, psychic mechanism? It is a revolving wheel, and the poet reflects: "I am like Job in the shadow of the wheel." The flesh, too, the frame of life, is wretched; it is prone to yield to the lures of transitory pleasure, vanishing smoke. In the end, the grave engulfs and levels all.

The flesh that is confined like a prisoner in his cage
 The flesh that dreams until taken by the pit,
 And after it sobers, the pit is good for it.
 Then the heights descend unto the valleys and the bridges kneel in water.

Time is the very essence of life. Among living creatures, only man is concerned with time and the poet is obsessed with it. Time is an

enchanted round of movement, without direction or true destination. Evening, a segment of time, is like a pilot repeating his weary run. In his "Ages," the poet contemplates the several stages of life:

Childhood is a yet unknown and pathless land,
 A still uncharted map without a designated hill or isle.
 Youth is a wind, tensed like a bow,
 A flowing wind, an airy, glowing silver;
 Old age is an hour before night,
 The silence enveloping the summits of the oak and nut tree,
 Floating by a well, in which the stars grow pale.

These veiled metaphors and allegories in Preil's verse are elegant in their complexity.

When the poet is about to reach the age of the demise of an older colleague, Yizhak Lamdan (1899-1954), he takes note of it in his "Transitions," as he does of the passing of his childhood hero, Sholom Aleichem (1859-1916). With a touch of sly humor and irony he marks his own anniversary in "August 1964."

My summer birthday:
 Gung-ho the little Chinese
 As a flower offers me
 A cursory "Good Morning."
 Letter after letter in my own script
 Shimmers as the wing of a bird in flight
 And in the gardens also the sunset will sing
 For me.
 These are my gifts.
 Though I fear the postman was blinded on this festive day
 Or perchance my address was lost on the icy street.

But the poet predicts, in his "From Me To The Year 2000," that by that time all of his problems will be over. By then, he will enjoy a "blessed sleep" and will "fear no evil." The tender-aged young children of the present generation will have reached middle age. For them, the moon will be a way-station on the fringes of an interstellar pathway. He contemplates his own passing days, which he sees in his "Love for Days" as "leaves of glass falling from my tree of time, flickering, seeking meaning, the gold of pineapple and orange." They are now growing ever more precious, since they are declining, and he clings to them lovingly:

With my hands I embrace the vanishing days
 And mourn their passing.
 I hold them as doves close to my heart
 And sing their praises:
 There are days flooded with glowing colors,
 And there are days sculpted and polished by the ice,
 Days fragrant as apples and days like rust,
 Days clear as crystal, and days beating their
 Rains.

As a Hebrew poet in America, upon whose head the "lonely heavens weigh down with a steely wrath," Preil poses the rhetorical question: "Are we merely captives of the bitter moment?" He is gripped by a sense of loneliness; he is alone at his task, alone in the sea of humanity that fills the coffee house, which to him is the workshop in which a poem is moulded and shaped. In fact, he has a series of verses entitled "Poems From the Coffee House." He seeks the "shadows of the years" in his cup, knowing that they will not estrange themselves from him. He articulates his mood in the coffee house in another poem, "Lines to Abraham Mapu:"*

. . . I sit in the lurking clouds of another age
In a coffee house where cups of aloneness abound. . . .
But the coffee house will never extinguish the flames of loneliness.

The poet also thinks of the apocalyptic end of humanity as the result of a nuclear disaster that is bound to come and destroy the world and history itself.

Will I sing tonight my last song
In the last coffee house?

(The Last Song)

Driven by his Muse, a strange and yet, to him, familiar force, he wrests from his consciousness, or perhaps his sub-conscious, the images and words that stir within him and form themselves into a poem. His sense of mission overpowers him. It is a consuming fire in his bones, as Jeremiah described his compulsion to prophesy, when the spirit came upon him. The poet not only yields to this urge, but actually welcomes it:

Approach me, my poem, knock on my door,
Without thee I am but naked and bare,
And the sun springs upon me as a beast of the night.

For spring has appeared, the garden blooms,
And I shall be but a clouded sky
If the season of song does not come to me. . . .

(Season of Song)

In "Meaning of a Poem" he declares

That the poem is his only firm ground,
A prayer that renews its color as a butterfly.

Moreover, in his "Biographical Note" he reveals that:

These many years
I am imprisoned
In mirage houses.
My bread is sour, and in my bones
Corrodes the rust of time.
All my cravings became snow.

* The first modern Hebrew historical novelist (1808-1867).

But as I strike my head
Against the rock of song,
The bursting fount
Is sweet to my palate.

In "To the Poem" (*Lashir*) he affords us a glimpse into the recesses of his soul, where one can discern the pangs of creativity, the inner struggle and conflict, the ecstasy and tension. Preil addresses the poem with intense rapture:

First I take you as a summer storm takes a tree,
With lashes of fire, with a keen blade,
Then coolly come to examine you.
Are you clear water or do you stutter like wine?
Is your sound silver or are you heavy like iron?
Perhaps you are a humble field of corn
Perhaps a wanton, haughty stalk of wheat?
I do not know.

In a similar idiom, he describes the powerful hold upon him of the initial lines of a poem as

A hawk that does not relax its grip on its prey
Or as a forest set ablaze by lightning
From all its blinded sides.

Yet, after the poet's fervor and passion are spent, he is disenchanted. His verse is now like

Blind arrows shot
Into the heart of an imaginary eternal city,
And you are only a weary hunter.

(The Weary Hunter)

There is turmoil and restlessness, sorrow and anguish in the world; it troubles and wearies the sensitive poet, who seeks release and respite. He learns of Nirvana, the supreme goal of life in Buddhism, that transcendent, indescribable state of serenity and bliss of non-existence which is achieved through the extinction of all passion and desire. It calls for a shedding of the self. In "Words of Oblivion and Peace" there seems to be an affinity between prince and poet regarding this concept of redemption:

I ate evening bread with the prince of Siam, him
of the brown face and white smile;
Garbed in festivity and humility of spirit like the first skin
of his body.
He chatted casually about London and New York—
big towns lacking in true wonders
And his memory paused on the people of his native land,
small of stature, who feed on pale rice
And about the flowers there, mighty with pride, that
glowingly mobilize their armies of color.
With low voice lowered, the son of Siam added that there
is nothing like the complete oblivion personified in Buddha—
Not the slightest ripple ever ruffles his seas
And there is nothing like the peace of seasons without end
that dream in his orchards.

But is such deliverance not a form of death, and, therefore, no solution to the problem of life? Yet Koheleth had pronounced the day of death as better than that of birth. The rabbis also explained the phrase "very good" in the Biblical story of creation, as referring to death, while life is described merely as "good."

III

Perhaps because he has spent all but the first decade of his life in America, Preil is more rooted in his American environment than is any other Hebrew bard. He was, naturally, influenced by American poets, notably Walt Whitman, Robert Frost, Edwin A. Robinson and Carl Sandburg, whose "Prairie" he translated into Hebrew. Preil's American themes are scattered throughout his works, though a third of his volume, *A Candle Against Stars*, consists of verse compiled under the rubric, "From the American Landscape." In a section of these poems, entitled "Sketches from Maine," he devotes a number of stanzas to Louis, "of the hard face and soft eyes," a type of Jew who was completely integrated in his American surroundings. Louis differed from his gentile neighbors, one answering to the Biblical name Elitzur, and another one, Bill, only in that he was often distracted by the recollection of his old crony, Akiva, the waggoner, who also had "a hard face and soft eyes, and gripped his reins with unsteady hand." Louis drove his car "with a firm hand on the wheel," thinking of Akiva whom he had left behind, "forlorn on the brink of desolation and anguish" in the old country. "With the palm of his hand, now also unsteady, Louis wipes away a hidden tear." In these memories, the far away "looked and made its appearance to Louis." Even time and distance could not obliterate or dull these reminiscences.

The poet is very much at home in New England. He is enamored of its rugged landscape, forests and lakes. He is lured by the temperate spring and the severe winter of Maine, Vermont and New Hampshire. In his *Agamim* (Lakes), a deeply contemplative poem, Preil portrays a merry winter scene. Skaters are gliding on the ice of the frozen lake:

The icy lake is wounded by whitening scratches—
Joyous wintry figures move and freeze upon it,
From somewhere, blind time has cast them forth
Time that burns and subsists.

Against this terrestrial scene, the poet counterposes its metaphysical model in the timeless heavens. The latter, in Platonic terms, may be said to be the abstract ideal model of the former. In this upper realm, time has placed a satellite and an airplane, symbols of human technology, which disrupt the perfect silence prevailing in those celestial precincts:

The second lake above, crossed with wounds of light and cloud—
It was the eternal witness of time, abiding with it.
The sharp point of a circling plane surprised it, or another moon
That splits its wave.

The plane and the satellite remind the poet of the array of weapons
of destruction which man's ingenuity has forged, and that bring him
ever closer to Armageddon. This will continue

Until the melody wanes on the lake
And the unknown world is gathered unto death.

The poet is very much at home in many sections of New York City.
He is familiar with its skyscrapers, parks, rivers, bridges, and other
sites. His poems deal with various quarters of the metropolis, including
Greenwich Village, Gramercy Park, Madison Avenue, Forty Second
Street, Brooklyn Heights and Central Park, and he attempts to repro-
duce their characteristic atmospheres. In "Sabbath in Williamsburg"
he depicts the peace and repose that reign in that pious Hassidic com-
munity on the holy Sabbath. It reminds him of his native Lithuanian
townlet, where Jews were annihilated by the Nazis.

On a crystal cold autumn Sabbath
There is something springy in a Jew's walk—
Wise clarity in the seeing of things.
The shipyard rests, the metals slumber on trees.
Graceful skies becalm the river. A droning plane pacifies
the skies.

Perhaps this is not the little town on my river—like childhood,
but its breath
Hovered today like a bird in my way:
Here is the crumbling fence, the tiny windows, the golden air.
Here are also Jewish children, who seemingly were not
given to extinction, and their past is the present.

And from a *Bet Midrash** burst out voices in a
never ending *Borkhi Nafshi***

At the day's outgoing the evening does not indulge again in
mundane doings among the stars
And the shipyard glitters, as if holiday-taught.

In examining Preil's verse one is impressed with the wide spectrum
of subjects and experiences that it embodies: a tree, a picture, an Israeli
postage stamp, a flower pot, and others of similar character. The titles
of his poems reflect this quality: "A Visit to a Friend," "Moving to an
Apartment," "A Poet and His Seas," "A First Flight" or even a prosaic
episode such as a stifling subway ride. This tendency has earned Preil the
distinction of being the only Hebrew poet of fact or artifact. His expansive

* Literally, a house of study or chapel.

** Literally "Bless, O my soul," the initial words of Psalm 104, which is the first of
a series of psalms read in traditional synagogues on Sabbath afternoons in the autumn
and winter months.

range of themes and content adds a new dimension to Hebrew poetry. One such poem included in his *Sketches of New York* describes a commonplace occurrence—a sultry summer morning in that city.

Half past eleven. A hot day glides forth like a wave,
ignites like a forest.
And the city denudes itself before me like a desert, like a
woman inviting ravishment.
My eyes are red from a disturbed night—into
my mouth creeps the taste of sand and weariness
And I am a beast caged by a great dazzler,
Who beats on the panes as with drums of Tophet—
A hunter who shoots poisoned arrows from the
levels of drudgery.

And, then, a refreshing contrast:

Soon from her different summer emerges a woman
and places
Peaches like small, cool suns, between the borders
of a plate
And her smooth arms waft like the calm brooks.
Later we shall go where watery tongues of the sea lick the shores
And the fire of the day will wane.

(New York: Wheel of Summer)

Another poem, in the same series, vividly describes a hot summer night in the artificially cooled comfort of an automated restaurant:

The Automat is open all night
Glasses speak, silver utensils smile
The heat is a deserter who abandoned his post.
Here reigns a strong winter, creature of a laboratory.
The air flashes mechanized cold and it is strange
That it almost resembles a ripple of wind combing
A whitish field before daybreak.

Something of the past possesses the people
Entering the restaurant;
They appear as if rising from a nocturnal race
Their images more secretive than night.

In "The Pigeon Feeder," Preil penetrates into the hearts of the everyday people whom he sketches. He describes them as:

Those who loiter towards evening in the gardens,
And feed the pigeons out of a grey sorrow,
Carry their loneliness as a sword in its sheath.

They listen to the rustle of wings
And their head is unbowed
Despite the sword-like loneliness.

He depicts another familiar sight in "Three Birds and One:"

Three birds
Were musical notes,
Three drops of color

On a telephone wire—a pale grey
Carrying sound from labyrinth to labyrinth
From an abstract land to one less defined.

Somewhere there peers at me one large eye—
A fourth bird dances on a grey wire.

Thus sings Gabriel Preil, the reflective lyric poet who has blazed new trails in Hebrew poetry. He has earned numerous awards in recognition of his artistic achievements, among them the much coveted Louis Lamed Prize, the Kovner Hebrew Poetry award, the Bitzaron Poetry Prize and, more recently, New York University's Irving and Bertha Neuman award. Before that, in 1972, he received the honorary degree of DHL from the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in New York. Preil, an American Hebrew poet who speaks to humanity and the world, has attained an important place in modern Hebrew letters, with his unique and original contribution.

Abortion: A Challenge to Halakhah

BLU GREENBERG

MY STOMACH TIGHTENS AT THE THOUGHT OF getting involved in a controversy over abortion, even with myself. Emotionally, theologically, as a Jew, and most of all as a mother who is daily nurtured by the sights and sounds of her children, I am opposed to abortion. And yet, the other facets of unwanted pregnancy are inescapable—fatigue and harassed parents, the shame of rape, the premature end of youth because of a foolish mistake, the degradation and danger of coat-hanger abortion, and, not the least, the overwhelming and exclusive claim that a child makes on a woman's life for many of her strongest years. Therefore, I supported and pressured for legalized abortion reform in the United States, with the full knowledge of the inconsistency and ambivalence of my position.

There are many conflicts and some truth in every argument, which is why I believe that the abortion issue will be here for a long time. There are conflicts between the generally accepted halakhic position on abortion and the individual needs of women. There is conflict in issues such as world population explosion and the need for numbers in the question of Jewish survival. There is conflict between the need for increased medical knowledge and the truth about the excesses of fetal experimentation; conflict in the majesty of the life-creative processes and the violence involved in aborting a human fetus; in the special love that an unplanned child receives and the increasing incidence of the battered child syndrome; conflict in the guilt and the relief; conflict even in the confusion of options. Then, too, there is conflict in areas of control assigned to religion or state or individual; one must ask, on a larger scale, what changes does a society undergo when greater areas of morality become matters of individual conscience?

But one is forced to make choices. Because everything in life is a trade-off and all decisions, halakhic and otherwise, are made with competing claims in mind (this I believe to be the underlying concept of *she-elot* and *tshuvot*), I must tenuously come down on the side of legal abortion. Furthermore, I would challenge my Orthodox community to broaden its interpretation of the halakhah concerning abortion, rather than maintaining the unqualified negative stance that it has taken. As a community, we should support liberalized, legalized abortion; we should do so with regrets, perhaps, and with grave reservations; we

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should do so with a sense of urgency to inform our people, and society at large, of our own value system.

This means new roles and responsibilities for the halakhic community, rather than the expenditure of time and energy that is now wasted in trying to impose its current interpretation of Jewish law upon a whole nation which has painfully moved in the other direction. To permit abortion as a medical option, yet to educate and infuse society with a transcending perspective might be the greatest contribution that moral and religious communities could make. Ultimately, it might end a long and grizzly history of illegal abortions, yet, simultaneously begin to halt facile abortions. It might also help a searching society to internalize an ethic which incorporates a sense of the preciousness of human relationship and of life itself.

The anti-abortion elements in the Jewish community summon three arguments: 1) the dangers to which legalized abortions could lead—i.e., abuses of scientific manipulation, such as eugenics or euthanasia; 2) the majority halakhic tradition (opinions); 3) the devaluation of human life in the abortion process itself—of men and women taking matters into their own hands, transcending their role as humans, playing God . . . (RCA statements).

1. What it could lead to: Although the notion of *s'yag* is a powerful one, and gives full credence to an understanding of human nature as it basically is, I do not believe that abortion will necessarily lead to eugenics and euthanasia, nor that prohibiting abortion would guarantee their elimination. And part of the responsibility of the halakhic community is not to say that it will, but to be ever watchful that it does not. To be a halakhic Jew means to split hairs as well as to determine what is a *s'yag* and what is an end in itself. Sweden liberalized its abortion laws many years ago, yet Germany, without a long history of legalized abortion, conceived of, and executed, the Aryan master race plan and the Mengele medical experiments. This domino argument is really not particularly relevant to the abortion controversy.

2. The halakhic position: In reviewing the literature¹ one finds that there are a number of different strands, some lenient and some strict. These all build upon several basic sources—Torah, Mishnah, Gemarah, of which the most direct halakhah is the Mishnah in *Oholot*, 7:6:

If a woman is having a hard labor, and her life is in danger, then the fetus may be cut up and extracted limb by limb, for her life takes precedence over that of the fetus. But if the greater part of the fetus has already been born, one may not touch it for the life of one person may not be taken for that of another.

1. See David Feldman, *Birth Control and Abortion*, the section on abortion, for a comprehensive and insightful review of the literature; also, Fred Rosner and J. Bleich, in *Tradition* (Winter 1968), for two good summaries in shorter form.

Until its birth, then, the fetus is not a *nefesh*. The halakhah does not view abortion as murder, worthy of capital punishment; nor does it ascribe rights to a fetus (which explains the relative absence of the "right to life" stance in the Jewish anti-abortion campaign). Exodus 21:12, 22-23 teach us that if a man strikes a pregnant woman and kills the fetus, he is fined only damages for property (which, ironically, are paid to the husband, since it is considered his property). Around these themes there has arisen a whole body of rabbinic literature, dealing with such questions as the fetus as pursuer, the status of the fetus before and after 40 days, and what constitutes legitimate circumstances for abortion.

On the whole, the traditional Jewish view of abortion has been more lenient than has the traditional Christian view. Yet, even where it was permitted, it was only in cases of therapeutic abortion, where there existed a grave threat to the life or health of the mother. With very few exceptions, the health of the fetus was not a valid reason for abortion; even in those minority opinions validating abortion for malformed fetuses, such as in the thalidomide cases, the rabbinic decisions were based on the threat to the mother's health, and not on considerations of the potential suffering of the child. (Although this seems most harsh, it actually contains a perfect legal symmetry. If the perfect fetus was not considered an entity in cases where it represented a threat to the mother's health, then it was also not considered an entity in any other deliberations).

However, the new issue that we face today is not therapeutic abortion (an argument which many apologists use to try to show that the Jews were there first and, thereby, foreclose a discussion of the current problem) but *abortion on demand*.

There are very few responsa dealing with abortion based on personal, economic, or family planning reasons. This can be understood historically:

a) In the life of the traditional Jewish communities in pre-modern times, where even birth control was carefully restricted and where the procreative function was high on the *mizvah* list, Jewish babies and new life were valued, particularly so because the life of a Jew was fragile; you had to have eight children if you wanted four to survive. Furthermore, until modern times, abortion was not common in the general culture and Jews in the Diaspora have always been affected by what was, or was not, manifest in the societies around them.

b) In our times, when most Jews opt to have one or two children and when the issue of abortion has assumed national importance, most Jews do not look to rabbinic leadership for decisions in these areas. It is even more startling that, within the modern Orthodox community, most women do not ask rabbis for *tshuvot* on such issues. To wit, a

friend in her late thirties with children well into school, recently appeared at a gathering of traditional women, all *shomrei mizvot*, *shomrei Shabbat*. After the first gasps of surprise when we learned that she was pregnant and healthy—but somewhat overwhelmed—the universal response was “Why don’t you have an abortion? I know someone who . . .”

Further proof of a breakdown of communication and interaction in these areas: Traditional Jewish couples, just like their Catholic counterparts, have long since made their personal and independent decisions on birth control. There are very few families with eight or ten children (even before the halakhically permissible pill), which would be the case for most normal, happily married couples. Perhaps they asked no questions because they sensed what the categorical answer would be . . .

Thus, since there are no precedents for what we call abortion on demand, one obvious way to maintain some integrity within the halakhic framework would be to broaden the interpretation of therapeutic abortion, to extend the principle of precedence of the mother’s actual life and health to include serious regard for the quality of life as well.

And there exist in the halakhic literature some precious few precedents where exactly that has been done. In the 19th and 20th centuries, there have been some *tshuvot* permitting abortion in cases of rape of a married woman, in cases where the birth would cause extended suffering to the mother, or, as mentioned above, in the minority decisions on malformed fetuses. These decisions were made by respected halakhists who, in their application of the law, moved from purely physical to mental and emotional considerations of the mother, which is what the current abortion issue is all about.

Therefore, I could conceive of a halakhic stance which would say that abortion is to be avoided for all of the traditional and theological reasons. Yet, the circumstances under which it would be permissible would be widened. Unless one is physically and emotionally unable to cope, not yet settled in marriage, etc., abortion should be avoided. However, if these conditions do exist, such as the need to support self and/or husband through school, the need for time for a marriage to stabilize, overwhelming responsibilities to other children and so forth, then abortion should be seen as a necessity rather than as an evil. Many *mizvot* are interdependent functions of timing and of the conditions which they regulate.

Before elaborating, let us reckon with the third argument against abortion:

c) The devaluation of human life and its dehumanizing effect upon those involved and upon a society at large. Here I believe that the RCA statements on abortion have real merit, for the problem

with easy abortion is that it can become simply a means of birth control and run the risk of lack of seriousness re the mystery and miracle of human conception and birth. (To date, it has not been shown to do so. For example, Bronx abortion clinic records for 1973 indicate to the contrary; in 1973, only 5% of 2001 abortions were repeats. However, with lower costs, wider dissemination, and greater availability, this development could easily take place . . .)

I understood when I read of the strike of nurses in a large Baltimore hospital. They could no longer abide the continual sight of aborted fetuses piled high in the bins of the abortion theater. The image that followed in my mind was the heaps of corpses which numbed the Allied inspection teams in Auschwitz, 1945, and which numb the Jewish people forever. It is the ultimate desecration of the images of God. Here, truly, is the dialectic in the abortion issue that one must come to grips with.

The obvious question then arises: how can one retain the principles of reverence for life which are built into the halakhah, while yet widening the grounds for abortion?

One way is simply that the sanctions for abortion—or against it—be set within some sort of total theological framework which takes conception and birth very seriously. One should ask, and answer, personal questions with wider reference to a religious code which has God and community as its value-source. This is the reverse of how abortion decisions are most often made today—within a very narrow frame of reference.

Secondly, it will take courage for *poskim*—and future *poskot*—to say that, in certain instances, abortion is the higher morality if one operates with the overall principles of *k'vod ha-b'riot* and *zelem elokim*, principles which are sometimes lost in the myriad of halakhot that have been developed to express these historical and theological priorities.

Some examples: a) The original principle was to protect the mother's life and health; in their responsa, this was extended by Rabbis Emden, (18th century) Waldenberg and Weinberg (20th century) to include her psychological health as well. Those *tshuvot* could support new ones which would encompass such variables as physical strength, stress, even delay in child-raising for purposes of family planning or a career.

b) In an interesting *tshuvah*, Rabbi Yitzhak Oelbaum (in *She-elot Yizhak* 64), ruled for abortion where the danger was not to the pregnant mother but to the sibling who would suffer should the milk dry up. Abortion for family planning could be based on a broader interpretation of that ruling.

c) The fact that, in Jewish law, love and human sexuality are positive values should allow room to cope with cases where a wife

becomes pregnant before the couple has a chance to develop a good relationship.

d) *Vehai bahem* could conceivably be applied where a *Tay-Sachs* or deformed fetus could be aborted. Here the dignity of *zelem elokim* must be interpreted, not as opposing abortion lest it lead to dehumanization, but, rather, in the light of what hell this image of God and his/her parents will have to suffer when the child inexorably decays and dies at four years of age. It is true that some children with deformities are more loved and evoke deeper feelings of compassion than do perfect specimens. Yet institutions are full of pathetic, rejected, malformed, non-functioning children who eke out a miserable, inhuman life and whose parents have deep wells of guilt. In this situation, forced birth is the dehumanizing experience.

e) The fact that the Gemarah conceived of a fetus as water until the 40th day allows further room for abortion under wider circumstances.

Beyond these, in new situations which are not covered by a broad interpretation of the existing halakhic position, halakhists should not be fearful of extending the halakhah to create a better meshing of personal needs with traditional dictates. This does not mean that halakhah must legitimate itself by simply saying "yes;" it does mean that in moving towards a more realistic position—saying yes under a wider variety of circumstances—its value judgments of "no" will also be taken seriously.

By moving in these directions, we would not be compromising the halakhah. The Rabbis took the goals of the Torah and the prophets and showed how to strive for the ideal in a real life with all of its conflicting claims. By opening its stance on abortion, traditional Judaism would go on to develop new roles and responsibility for itself today.

One such responsibility, then, would be to support research on earlier and self-implemented methods of pregnancy detection. If modern science has been able to develop the pill (which is halakhically permissible, despite the fact that it circumvents the goal of procreation) then it is presumably also capable of developing the morning-after-detection-and-antidote kit, which could be used, if we rule the fertilized egg not yet to be human life. It goes without saying that the halakhic community should investigate and develop better methods of contraception and wider education on birth control.

Some additional responsibilities would be the establishment of adoption agencies, continued vigilance and monitoring of the effects of legal abortion lest abuses arise, greater communal sharing of responsibility in raising children, greater sex education and responsibility for one's sexual life.

The halakhic stance should not simply turn into a case of "abortion—no," but, in this particular case, a grudging "yes." The emphasis should

be: The abortion alternatives are there, but the case for children is that each individual is special and unique, that every child has the right to a life of love and care, that children are precious and not something that gets in the way. Having a child is not to be taken for granted or taken lightly. A Jewish theology of abortion should include the statement that the Jewish people, in particular, need to expand the birthrate and replenish themselves after Auschwitz and after four wars in Israel even as we seriously attend to the question, generally, of world overpopulation. These ideas cannot be coerced; rather, they must be set forth as valid and desirable options, competing in a society where the reverse messages are currently more popular.

And what effect would this have upon halakhah itself? It might lead to a reversal of what operates today. As Jews we have always believed in an ethical, juridical system which governs every aspect of our lives, not because it was imposed upon us, but because we had accepted it as binding. There is a great need to reinstate the capacity of halakhah to function that way again in the areas of ethics and morality.

It would also, in effect, encourage more Jews, even those who consider themselves observant of Jewish law, to take more seriously the halakhah as a moral force in their lives. Unfortunately, it has been reduced to the observance of ritual, while ethical, social and sexual decisions are more susceptible to TV advertising messages. I suspect that more women would consider the alternatives to an unthinking abortion if they felt that the halakhic system took their needs seriously. By the same token, the responsibility lies upon those on the fringes, or within the community, to ask the questions; the responsa literature did not grow in a vacuum.

Finally, there are two other areas in which the abortion issue could have fruitful spinoffs, were it to move our religious leaders into action or even to attention.

Abortion is really a symptom of a larger problem. Ours is a society which establishes the value of goods over relationships, of possessions over people, of ease and comfort over labor and a life of giving. As creatures of modernism, we tend to see our daily existence as of cosmic importance while losing sight of our real consequence in the course of human civilization. We try to hide these existential truths of human existence with pills, goods, junk and even sexual ecstasy. I have nothing against ease and comforts, or even against delusions of self-import, but the imbalance in our society is too obvious to miss. As a result, contemporary society borders on the selfish. And Jews are no better than any other group in this respect.

The clamor for abortion points up the way that women feel about their role in society and the constriction of their options as a result of

motherhood. Their umbilical cord has not been cut and they are dependent and powerless. The ultimate expression of this feeling is the notion which many feminists have made central to their pro-abortion claims, the right to control their own bodies. I disagree with this focus. It is simply too narrow a stance when considering the miracle of life creation. It is also too narcissistic, almost bordering on illusions of virgin birth, a notion of which I tend to be suspicious. Furthermore, it releases men from responsibility, both from sexual responsibility and from child-raising, thereby reinforcing the sexist models which it seeks to undermine. On the other hand, moral theologians ought to attend to the climate of disabilities and inequities regarding women—in society in general and in the Jewish community, in the synagogues, in marriage and divorce, in education and in liturgical and religious leadership—so that the situation will not foment into a final crisis with the rejection of child-birth and child-raising as the expression of dissatisfaction.

Thus, hand in hand with greater halakhic responsibility and flexibility regarding abortion, there should be a critique of the society which currently reduces human concerns to such issues. Along with this must come some moral guidance on how a whole society can begin to pull itself up by its boot straps and integrate those values which have at their center reverence for life itself.

Honesty vs. Hypocrisy

REUVEN P. BULKA

THE EXPERIENCES OF JUDAISM IN AMERICA ARE subject to many interesting, often unpredictable fluctuations. Life as a rabbi in a Jewish community is always a challenge, for it is hard to know what novel situation may soon emerge, and what response to make to it.

Along these lines, a little while ago a young couple came by to bid me farewell before their vacation trip, and in the course of conversation it developed that they would be flying on Shabbat. I seized this opportunity to suggest that they order kosher meals for the Shabbat flight. They laughed, thinking this was a facetious but insubstantial remark. However, I persisted, and, after a lengthy debate of the pros and cons, they concluded that they could not order the kosher meals, as that would be "hypocritical."

The intellectual honesty of the couple is beyond question. What must be questioned is whether ordering kosher meals for a Shabbat flight is, indeed, hypocritical. The larger question springing forth is that of consistency in observance as opposed to keeping some precepts and neglecting others.

No doubt, in the existential climate of the times, with their emphasis on the intimate link between inner feeling and outward expression, desecrating Shabbat and eating kosher at the same time is not characteristic of consistent behavior. This article attempts to explore some Jewish sources relative to the problem, and to understand the meaning of hypocrisy as it applies to the day-to-day encounter.

I

The dictionary definition of a hypocrite is a "person who pretends to have moral or religious beliefs, principles, etc., he does not actually possess." It is implicit, when we use the term hypocrite, that it refers to one who purposely projects a false image of virtue. An unconscious but equally false image projection would not elicit a negative reaction of the same intensity.

The Talmud addresses itself to the matter of hypocrisy in positive and prohibitive terms. On the positive side, the Talmud asserts—"Your 'yes' should be just and your 'no' should be just."¹ According to Abbaye, this means that "one must not speak one thing with the mouth, another

1. *Baba Mezia* 49a.

with the heart.”² In this concise statement the Talmud introduces the concept of integrity, wherein the outer expression and inner feeling are integrated with each other in honest communication. Whilst there are some legal exceptions,³ nevertheless the ethical imperative to speak honestly without deception is a well-established norm in Judaism. The extent to which integrity is lauded can be seen in Rashi’s comment on the reference to Joseph’s brothers as being “unable to speak peaceably to him.”⁴ Rashi observes—“From their discredit we may infer something to their credit; they did not say one thing with their mouth while thinking something else in their hearts.” The behavior of Joseph’s brothers was despicable, no doubt, yet their honest refusal to speak to him deceitfully is singled out as a positive feature of an otherwise undesirable demeanor.

The Torah scholar is singled out for particular admonition. “Any Torah scholar whose inside is not like his outside, is no scholar.”⁵ Another view considers such a person as abominable. No doubt the Talmud evokes here a feeling easily corroborated by daily experience. In almost every community, even one of moral or theological laxity, congregations will tolerate moral failings of members, but will hold no brief for any member of the clergy who indulges in questionable activities. True, they consider the clergy to be human, but they also demand some exemplary model to which they can point and whom they can respect. The possibility exists that these religious leaders serve as a form of vicarious atonement for the masses, but the fact remains that, in spite of the talk of equality and of all being human, a higher degree of integrity is expected of the leaders. Watergate points to this quite cogently. Americans almost expect politics to have unseemly parts to it, and can live with this reality, but if the unseemliness reaches the top they have no one to look up to, no embodiment of moral principle. However ridiculous it might be, people desire a model, an ideal which they can emulate at the same time that they deny the desired ideal in their own lives.

2. *Ibid.*

3. One obvious exemption is in times of danger. Thus, “When Ulla went up to Israel he was joined by two inhabitants of Hozai, one of whom arose and slew the other. The murderer asked Ulla, ‘Did I do well?’ ‘Yes,’ he replied. ‘Moreover, cut his throat clear across.’ When he came before R. Johanan, he asked him, ‘Maybe, God forbid, I have strengthened the hands of transgressors?’ He replied, ‘You saved your life.’” (*Nedarim* 22a). As an aside, *RaN* mentions that Ulla told the killer to slit the throat to hasten death and alleviate agony.

Another exemption is that “One may modify a statement in the interests of peace.” (*Yevamot* 65b). According to one Talmudic view, this is not merely an option, but is mandatory.

Then there is the classic instance of the bride—“How does one dance before the bride? Bet Shammai say: The bride as she is. And Bet Hillel say: ‘Beautiful and graceful bride!’” (*Ketuvot* 16b-17a). Hillel allows even the undeserved compliment, perhaps because beauty is in the eyes of the beholder, who must have perceived beauty in some way, so that the statement is not untrue.

4. *Genesis* 37:4.

5. *Yoma* 72b.

The main prohibition emanating out of the requirement of absolute honesty and integrity is—"It is forbidden to deceive (literally, steal the mind) people, even gentiles."⁶ The Talmud offers some pertinent examples of deception, or mind stealing:

A man should not urge his friend to dine with him when he knows that his friend will not do so. And he should not offer him many gifts when he knows that his friend will not accept them. . . . And he should not invite him to anoint himself with oil if the jar is empty.⁷

The line between integrity and chicanery is a thin one. The act itself is not as decisive as the intent. Regarding the prohibition against inviting one to anoint himself from an empty jar, the Talmud comments—"If, however, the purpose is to show the guest great respect, it is permitted."⁸ The act is the same, only the true intent separates the genuine from the false.

The Talmud also points out that there are some reasonable limits beyond which we need not concern ourselves with possible deception.

Mar Zutra the son of R. Nahman was once going from Sikara to Mahuza, while Raba and R. Safra were going to Sikara, and they met on the way. Believing they had come to meet him he said, "Why did the Rabbis take this trouble to come so far to meet me?" R. Safra replied, "We did not know that the master was coming; had we known we would have put ourselves out more than this!" Raba said to him, "Why did you tell him this; you have now upset him?" He replied, "But we would be deceiving him otherwise!" "No. He would be deceiving himself."⁹

We must make a distinction between the intent to fool and the attitude of foolishness. The Talmud judiciously suggests that honesty is something internal, and external forces or thoughts which impute the wrong motives to innocent behavior need not impede the spontaneous flow of normal expression. To maintain an honest posture is an ethical challenge; to ensure that everyone thinks you are honest is an impossibility, both experientially and philosophically.

One apparent contradiction to the internality of the concept of hypocrisy is the well known advice—"Only a part of man's praise may be said in his presence, but all of it in his absence."¹⁰ Rashi's comment on this is that excessive praise appears as flattery, or dishonest acclaim. It *appears so*, even if the praise is honestly intended. However, it is likely that the concern here with appearance has nothing to do with judging

6. *Hullin* 94a.

7. *Ibid.*

8. *Ibid.*

9. *Ibid.*, 94b. It should be noted that this is the same R. Safra who was a model of honesty. He once had an article to sell and, whilst reciting the Sh'ma, a prospective buyer made an offer, which R. Safra overtly ignored as he was in the midst of prayer. The buyer, thinking that R. Safra had rejected the offer, upped his bid. When R. Safra finished the Sh'ma, he gave the article for the original bid, as that was what he had intended to ask for in the first instance. (*Sheiltot*, Genesis-36).

10. *Eruvin* 18b.

intent. It is assumed that the praise is sincere; the admonition to temper the acclaim is along the lines of "he who adds, subtracts."¹¹ It appears that there is a point of diminishing returns in lauding a fellow; fulsome adjectives may, in effect, either embarrass the intended beneficiary or so discredit the effuser as to render all his pronouncements meaningless.¹²

Essentially, it is quite obvious that Judaism places a great premium on honest, sincere expression. Even the almost pathological abhorrence of swine within Judaism can be seen as the affirmation of natural integrity and the rejection of false images. The swine is unique in that, whilst it is unfit to be eaten, its outward signs are the same as that of the acceptable animal. "When the swine is lying down it points out its hoofs, as if to say, 'I am clean.'"¹³ The swine thus symbolizes the projection of acceptability in spite of its falseness. In a way, then, the concept of *kashrut* is not so far removed from the demands of integrity.

Nevertheless, regarding the vacationers, eating kosher on the Shabbat flight would have been free from false projections. Like the man making the proverbial hole-in-one on Yom Kippur, whom were they going to tell? In terms both of the outward expression and the inner intent, it would not have been hypocritical at all.

II

The discussion until now has focused on the philosophical aspect of honesty vs. hypocrisy. At this point it is crucial to bring the concept of *mizvah*, commandment, into the picture.

To say the least, traveling on Shabbat is not *Shabbos-dik*; eating kosher is a bona fide fulfillment of Judaic values. Is this dualistic, theologically schizophrenic experience an instance of immersing in a *mikvah* with an unclean reptile in the hand, or is it a desirable avoidance of yet another transgression, a way to prevent compounded error? In other words, is it a mockery to fulfill a precept at the very time of transgression?

Purity in the fulfillment of commandments is no doubt desirable. "And let all your actions be for the sake of God."¹⁴ Desirability notwithstanding, it is recognized that purity can remain an abstract, distant goal not readily actualized. This is not seen as an excuse to desist from Judaic experience. Rather, "A man should always occupy himself with

11. *Sanhedrin* 29a.

12. See *M'Harsha* on *Eruvin* 18b, who suggests that the reason for this might be so that he who is flattered will not become swell headed and think that he is great. He cites a Midrash (*Genesis Rabbah* 32:3), where this same caution about over-effusion is mentioned regarding praise directed to God. *M'Harsha* rightly concludes that reasons of swell-headedness could not apply to God, and thus implies that swell-headedness is not the main factor even in the human situation, as the Midrash cites the two applications in the same discussion.

13. *Genesis Rabbah* 65:1.

14. *Avot* 2:17.

Torah and good deeds, though it is not for their own sake, for out of doing good with an ulterior motive comes doing good for its own sake.”¹⁵ In another statement, the Talmud asserts “If one does them for other motives, it would be better had he not been created.”¹⁶ *Tosafot*, in resolving this contradiction, distinguishes between the lack of purity, which is not the highest expression but is at least *on the way*, and rebellious motives, which are so despicable as to result in the Talmud’s questioning the value of such existence. The concept of “on the way towards true expression” is an obvious necessity. If Judaism were to insist on absolute sincerity and true commitment from the outset, it would, in effect, legislate itself out of existence. Anything less than wholesome being forbidden, no immersion in Jewish experience could start without total commitment to it. The educative process of trying would be ruled out, and commitment would have to come almost in a vacuum.¹⁷

A step beyond purity in fulfilling a commandment is the problem of fulfillment which is achieved through transgression. Generally, one cannot fulfill a precept through a trespass, as for instance a stolen *lulav* cannot be used to actualize the commandment of *lulav* on Sukkot.¹⁸

Granted that this is not the unanimous opinion, it nevertheless is the prevailing view.

A more pertinent situation revolves around the recitation of a *brakhah*, a blessing, on food which was acquired illegally.

If one stole a *se’ah* of wheat and kneaded it and baked it and set aside a portion of it as hallah (priestly portion of the dough), how would he be able to pronounce the benediction? He would surely not be pronouncing a blessing but pronouncing a blasphemy.¹⁹

To make mention of God, or to approach God through a blessing via pilfering makes a mockery of Judaism. Over and above that, it implicitly establishes the commandment as the ultimate end, the attain-

15. *Pesahim* 50b.

16. *Berakhot* 17a.

17. Even the commitment made on Sinai, “We will do and we will understand” in which commitment preceded knowledge, is not a contraindication of this view, for then the overwhelmingness of the Divine presence acted as an irresistible force inducing commitment. For a further discussion of this matter, see E. Berkovits, *God, Man and History* (New York: Jonathan David, 1959), specially pp. 31-37.

18. *Sukkah* 30a.

19. *Baba Kamma* 94a.—See further, *Kesef Mishneh—Hilkhot Berakhot* 1:19, for development of this concept and how it applies to making a blessing on stolen matzoh. According to *TaZ* (*Orah Hayyim* 196: 1—note 1) *Rabad*, who argues with Maimonides and says that one can recite a blessing when eating forbidden food, applies this only to one who does so unwittingly, but one who consciously eats forbidden food cannot, even in *Rabad*’s view, recite a blessing. *TaZ* consistently avers that in cases of performing a *mizvah* through transgression no blessing can be made. See *Orah Hayyim* 11:6, note 5, where he calls fringes (*zizit*) from stolen wool an abomination. See also *Orah Hayyim* 25:12, note 14, where *TaZ* holds that even after *y’oosh* (owners’ giving up hope of ever recovering stolen goods) and change in possession no blessing may be recited. In this he differs from *Magen Avraham*.

ment of which justifies all means. Commandment and Commander are fused into one, so that, in essence, not God is embraced, but the commandment is idolized. Hence, blasphemy. The warning of the Kotzker Rebbe that a *mizvah* can become *avodah zarah*, idolatry, can be readily appreciated as no mere fiction.

At the same time that fulfillment *through* sin is disavowed, fulfillment *in spite of* sin is encouraged. Thus, the Talmud elaborates;

Why is it written, "Be not much wicked"? Must one not be much wicked, yet he may be a little wicked? Rather, if one has eaten garlic and his breath smells, shall he eat more garlic that his breath may smell even more?²⁰

One transgression, or even a multitude of transgressions, is no excuse for neglecting other fulfillments. The demands of consistency do not apply in the realm of "wrong." The key, of course, is causality. When the actualization of a precept is effected through a sin, it is better to desist entirely, to maintain the status quo. When dealing with a commandment in isolation, performing a *mizvah* in spite of previous transgression, having sinned is no excuse for sinning more. Why smell of garlic when theological mouth wash is readily available?

This notion finds its most controversial expression in the recitation of the priestly blessing, *birkhat kohanim*. Many synagogues, even Orthodox ones, have done away with the priestly blessing as part of the liturgy on the grounds that they have no *kohen* (priest) who is *shomer shabbat* (Shabbat observing). No doubt it is repulsive to many that they should be led in blessing by a non-observant Jew. Whilst it is true that in many cases it is the *kohen* himself who withdraws from this priestly experience, still, the attitude latent in the withdrawing process is, in many cases, the feeling that the congregation is uncomfortable with an unpriestly priest.

How consistent is the public attitude in this matter with the halachic norm? Maimonides deals forthrightly with the situation.

A priest who did not have any of the things that would disqualify him from *nesiat kappayim* (in effect, reciting the priestly blessing), even though he is not a sage, and is not observant, or people complain about him, or he does not handle his business righteously, he can be involved in the priestly blessing and we do not prevent him. For this is a positive commandment incumbent on every priest that is fit for the blessing, and we do not tell a wicked person to add to his wickedness by desisting from the precepts.²¹

Perhaps in anticipation of the attitude prevailing today, Maimonides continues:

And do not wonder and say, In what way can the blessing of this simpleton be useful? Because the bestowal of blessing is not dependent

²⁰. *Shabbat* 31b.

²¹. *Hilkhot Tefilah*, 15:6.

on the priests but on God, as it is written, "*They shall put my Name on the Children of Israel and I will bless them.*" The priests do as they are commanded and God in His mercy blesses Israel as He sees fit.²²

The priest, in Maimonides' view, is merely a catalyst who initiates a process the end result of which, we hope, is Divine blessing. Who the priest is and how observant he may be are immaterial, for blessedness will come only by God's will. If there were a direct connection between the community representative and the chances of prayer being accepted, the standards would surely be more stringent. Thus, concerning the community agent in prayer, whom we refer to today as the *hazzan*, the cantor, "We should appoint as the congregation's agent the greatest person in the congregation in wisdom and deeds."²³ This attitude toward the cantor has, in all likelihood, spilled over into the priests' domain, for invalid yet understandable reasons.

The element of theological integrity, of total commitment, thus has two aspects, the personal and the public. For a representative of the community, in effect its model and focal point, sincere and consistent commitment is mandatory. In personal fulfillment, consistency and complete avowal is certainly desirable, but the neglect or negation of one precept should not be an excuse for total abdication, throwing out the baby with the *mikvah* water. The Jew who does not observe Shabbat can still maintain the norms of kashrut, the Jew who eats leaven on Passover can still hear the shofar on Rosh Hashanah, and those who eat pork should still consider fasting on Yom Kippur.

Undercutting the entire question of hypocrisy is a more complex problem, the existentialist climate prevalent today and its relation to Jewish expression.

At the same time that existentialist philosophies of Judaism abound, there are some basic issues raised in attempting to marry the two. Relevant to this discussion is the problem of the subjective state of the *mizvah*-doer and the objective, even essential commandment. Quite often one hears Jews say that they would like to embrace this or that precept, but that they are not yet "ready" for it. The vacationers were probably in the same frame of mind, the environmental conditions of their trip not being consistent with the feelings which they thought they should have when eating kosher food, or at least when specially ordering it.

The contrary view is taken in a well known 13th century work, *Sefer Hahinukh*.

Know that man is formed according to his deeds, and his heart and all his thoughts follow the deeds with which he is occupied, whether good or bad. Even a man completely wicked in his heart, the passion of whose inclinations is evil at all times, if his spirit be aroused and he places his efforts and preoccupation diligently in Torah and *mizvot*, even

22. *Ibid.*, 15:7.

23. *Ibid.*, 8:11.

not for the sake of Heaven, still immediately he will lean toward the good and with the power of his deeds will eliminate his passion for evil, for man's heart is determined by his deeds. And even if a man be completely righteous and his heart upright and sincere, desiring Torah and mizvot, if perchance he will occupy himself constantly with shameful things, as for example if a king forced him to work in a bad profession, in truth if his entire preoccupation be constantly with that profession, he will eventually deviate from his righteous heart to be completely wicked, for it is known and true that man is determined according to his deeds.²⁴

The power of commandment, if not the essence of Judaism, inheres in the deed shaping the person. *Sefer Haḥinukh* cites the following Talmudic evidence of this view: "God desired to make Israel worthy; therefore He gave to them the Torah to study and many commandments to do."²⁵

In effect, this becomes a chicken-egg problem. Is it the person in the purity of his subjective state who should wait until he is ready to embrace a precept, or is it the precept and its mystical shaping power that should be embraced, precisely because one does not feel ready? The previously cited sources lean toward the latter contingency, as does the well known statement, "The precepts were given only in order that man might be refined by them."²⁶

The issue raised is too vital to gloss over, but in the framework of this analysis it is not the central issue. For our purposes, it suggests that the vacationers would have been well within the mainstream of Jewish thought in ordering the kosher meals. Insofar as the question of hypocrisy is concerned, the express fear that the act might seem deceitful is almost a guarantee against its really being hypocritical. For it is paradoxical, yet true, that hypocrisy is usually found in those who are not even aware of the hypocritical nature of their behavior.²⁷ And insofar as the purity of the commandment is concerned, the optimist would say that the kosher experience on the Shabbat flight might even initiate a higher state of Jewish awareness.

One motto that evolves out of this discussion is a semi-credo that speaks the language of the times for a problem of the times; "Try it; you might not like it, but it might like you."

24. *Sefer Haḥinukh*, *Mizvah* 20.

25. *Ibid.*, *Makkot* 23b.

26. *Genesis Rabbah* 44:1.

27. This argument must be tempered by the possibility that the hypocrite, to hide the hypocrisy, might use verbal expressions of fear that his act be interpreted as deceitful to neutralize such thoughts. A parallel situation is found in the exemption given to the groom from reciting *Sh'ma* on his wedding night (*Berakhot* 16a), as he is pre-occupied and cannot have proper concentration for the *Sh'ma*. *Tosafot* (*Berakhot* 17b) asserts that, in present times, since we do not concentrate properly, anyway, even the groom must recite the *Sh'ma*, since by not reading it he would be implying that normally he concentrates properly. Change in circumstance here changes a purely intended exemption into a false act.

Messianic Pragmatism: The Zionism of Horace M. Kallen

SARAH SCHMIDT

SEVERAL YEARS AGO, IN AN ARTICLE ENTITLED "America's Two Zionist Traditions," social historian Judd Teller made an effort to distinguish a special, American kind of Zionism that had existed in the United States around the time of World War I, the period in which Louis D. Brandeis served as leader of the American Zionist movement.¹ Teller noted that, traditionally, Zionism had expressed itself in one of two modes, the practical or the romantic. Practical Zionism flourished mainly in Eastern Europe, where the masses of frustrated Jews saw Zionism as an opportunity for simultaneous release from both Czarist oppression and Orthodox Jewish constriction. Romantic Zionism existed in the pre-Herzl era in countries like England and the United States, where the Anglo-American tradition accorded high regard for Judaism and the Jew, and for the Holy Land as the home of the Chosen People. Thus, the purpose of European Zionism was essentially to rehabilitate the Jews, while early American Zionism stressed the noble and incorruptible nature of the Jews which would be brought to complete realization in a land of their own.

According to Teller, the Zionist movement as it developed in America between 1914 and 1921 was able to combine these two traditions and give a unique "Messianic-pragmatic" emphasis to its Zionist activity. Following the American model that considered philanthropy a form of social action, Messianic pragmatism synthesized the concept of Palestine as asylum with that of Palestine as Utopia. The intellectually elite group that formulated American Zionist policy during this period believed not only that Zionism would normalize the status of the Jews and, thereby, solve the "Jewish problem;" they believed, also, that Zionism would provide the means for the realization of an ideal state.

On the basis of a recent study of the Zionist activity of the philosopher and social activist, Horace M. Kallen, it appears that Teller's terminology is quite correct in describing the direction which American Zionism took from 1914 to 1921. Kallen's extensive private papers from this period, as well as his published writings, show that he was the man most responsible for defining "Messianic pragmatism" and for

1. Judd Teller, "America's Two Zionist Traditions," *Commentary* (October 1955): 343-352.

influencing those who could put it into practice. The evidence shows, as well, that Kallen was the author of the famous Pittsburgh Program, the most characteristic expression of Messianic pragmatism which the delegates to the 1918 convention of the Zionist Organization of America adopted as their credo.²

Kallen, who is usually remembered for his concept of cultural pluralism and for his influence as an educator and activist for liberal causes, had come to Zionism via an unusual route. Born in Germany in 1882, he had been brought to the United States in 1887 when his father, an Orthodox rabbi, emigrated to Boston. Kallen's upbringing and influences were initially entirely within the Jewish tradition. On entering public school, however, Kallen, like many immigrant children, found that his home and his parents' values clashed with those of his "Yankee" teachers. One teacher especially, an agnostic who found Kallen's Judaism particularly "amusing," took it upon himself to "talk religion" to Kallen, with the view to convincing him of its outmodedness in a new and modern country. Though the child resented these conversations, they left their mark, and it was not long before he was ready to replace the "sordid realities of the daily struggle for bread," and the seemingly onerous rituals of the Jewish tradition, as defined by his "God-fearing, proud father," with a dedication to the "heroic America of the textbook legends" featuring exciting tales of the Puritan fathers and their successors, an "embattled handful of lovers of liberty."³

When Kallen rebelled against his father he rejected more than the seemingly tyrannical personality who wished his son both to subordinate his new found freedom to family demands, and to deny his interest in secular learning in favor of the duties of Jewish scholarship. He rejected, in one grand sweep, all of the tradition which his father represented. "In the Oversoul of Emerson . . . and in the God of Spinoza . . . I found weapons with which to confound the Jehovah of my father and his rules," he wrote in 1933. By the time he was an adolescent, he had denied for himself any validity in the Jewish doctrine; he was "extremely repellent about Judaism," discarding both its theological and ritual content. Kallen, who in later life liked to refer to himself as an "atheistic humanist," came, in those early years, very close to casting aside entirely his Jewish identity. But at the age of eighteen, just as the century turned, he was able to leave home permanently and to begin his studies at Harvard College "where a Yankee, named Barrett Wendell, re-Judaized me."

2. For complete documentation of these assertions, see my dissertation (1973), *Horace M. Kallen and the Americanization of Zionism*.

3. There has been little published on the details of Kallen's life; these facts come from his introduction to his *Individualism: An American Way of Life* (New York, 1933), and from a series of interviews he had with me in 1972 and 1973.

Kallen's re-Judaization derived from an uncommon source, and took, therefore, a unique course. Wendell, a pioneer in the teaching of American literary history, emphasized in his courses the influence of the Hebraic tradition and of the Old Testament on the Puritan mind and on the development of American character. At Harvard, Kallen was beginning to realize that, despite the American ideals of brotherhood and equality, his Jewishness rendered him different from the rest of his classmates. He was especially receptive, therefore, to Wendell's interpretations, and before long came to see his Old Testament heritage in a different perspective and to develop an interest in the Hebraic, the secular, non-theological aspects of Jewish tradition.

At Harvard, also, Kallen came to know well a particularly inspiring teacher and thinker, the philosopher, William James, whose teachings emphasized the reality of many-ness in a world with no fixed, absolute, standards of truth. His ideas helped to release Kallen from his previous assumption that in order to accept his American present he had to discard his Jewish past. Both were necessary in order to form a well-integrated identity; both, therefore, according to James, were valid, or true.

The influence of Wendell and James, combined with Kallen's newly found need to re-evaluate his Jewish roots, led him, in 1902, to return to his Jewishness. It was not, however, the Jewishness of his father and of his father's tradition. Kallen continued to reject what he called the Judaistic component of Jewish tradition—the theology, the rituals, the laws and regulations of Jewish observance. Instead, he identified with the Hebraic past of the Jewish people, the values of a unique culture which had defined the Jews and had bound them together throughout the ages. Zionism, a secular Hebraic ideal to renationalize the Jewish people with a group life of their own, became for Kallen the replacement for the Judaistic tradition which he could no longer accept. It was, also, by the unique twist which Kallen gave to his definition of Zionism, a means through which he could remain within the Jewish community yet continue his allegiance to the new values that he had adopted as an American, without the problem of "dual loyalty." For if, as Wendell maintained, the Old Testament was the source of the "American Idea," the inspiration for the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights, the foundation for the formation of a free society with guarantees of liberty and justice for all, then Zionism, the means of re-creating another state dedicated to these Hebraic ideals, was highly compatible with Kallen's commitments as an American. Becoming a Zionist came to mean, in his eyes, becoming a better American; especially was this true for Jewish-Americans, with their historic attachment to Old Testament values.

Kallen's decision to become a Zionist was entirely a personal,

abstract one, not influenced by the Jewish community or by the fledgling American Zionist movement. He had derived his Zionism from the "American Idea" rather than from what he knew of Jewish law or Jewish history. Thus, when Kallen later became active in the Zionist movement, his approach and stance were rather different from any of the several European Zionist traditions. Significantly, his formulation of Zionism was to appeal most to other American intellectuals who had become alienated from Jewish tradition, but who were searching for some other means to regain ties with the Jewish community.

The most crucial individual to have been influenced by Kallen's ideas, an influence that, for a time, changed the course of American Zionist history, was the famous leader of American reform, and, later, Supreme Court Justice, Louis D. Brandeis. Brandeis, an almost assimilated Jew who believed, like most Americans of his day, that "habits of living or of thought which tend to keep alive difference of origin . . . are inconsistent with the American ideal of brotherhood," had had little contact with the Jewish people until, at the age of fifty-four, he mediated a strike among New York's mostly Jewish garment workers. This experience, plus a chance contact with Jacob deHaas, a former secretary of Theodore Herzl who had come to the United States to work for the Zionist movement, led Brandeis to a strong admiration for the ethical values which he found among the Jews, to a desire to identify himself with them, and to a sense that, through Zionism, there might be built another state dedicated to the principles of justice and equality which, for him, were the cornerstones of America.⁴ Yet, Brandeis was convinced that so-called "dual loyalties" were un-American; he was unable, therefore, to make a commitment to the Zionist movement until he found some way, intellectually, to rationalize the pull that he had begun to feel emotionally.

Kallen's Zionist definitions provided Brandeis with this rationale. Letters preserved by both Kallen and Brandeis document the fact that, in 1913, when Brandeis was reported to have shown a budding interest in Zionism, Kallen wrote to him of his own Zionist ideas, and sent him copies of articles in which he had defended his Zionism against criticisms of dual loyalty. Impressed with Kallen's point of view, Brandeis arranged to meet with him. Their conversations took place on an overnight boat trip from Boston to New York that both were taking to the "Extraordinary Conference of Representatives of American Zionists," a meeting at which Brandeis surprised everybody by agreeing to become Chairman

4. To date, the best summary of Brandeis' sudden affiliation with Zionism is in Melvin Urofsky, *A Mind of One Piece* (New York, 1971). The quotation is from a 1905 Brandeis speech, "What Loyalty Demands" in A. T. Mason, *Brandeis: A Free Man's Life* (New York, 1942), p. 442.

of a Provisional Executive Committee that would assume responsibility for the World Zionist movement during World War I.⁵

Though there is no conclusive record of what they discussed, Kallen has recalled that their talks centered on Brandeis' belief that one "could not be an American and a Zionist completely."⁶ Kallen maintained that the proclaimed antagonism between Americanism and Zionism was a false claim which did not have to be. The arguments which he used to convince Brandeis were the same ones, derived from Wendell and from James, which he had used to convince himself. Furthermore, he elaborated on his newly conceived doctrine of cultural pluralism, the concept that the Declaration of Independence and its phrase "all men are created equal" implied "equality of the different," of different social groups and cultures as well as of different individuals. America, he suggested, was founded with the guarantee to preserve differences rather than to enforce conformity; American democracy aimed "through union, not at uniformity, but at variety, at a one out of many."⁷

Kallen's concept challenged the currently prevalent "melting-pot" assumption, and it was crucial to his conviction that Zionism and Americanism were not mutually antagonistic. It underlay, also, his conclusion that if the Jews of the United States were to maintain themselves as a self-respecting ethnic entity, able to contribute their "theme" to the "American symphony," they needed to relate to the values of their tradition made relevant to modern times. Subject to the secularizing influences of the United States, Hebraism was disintegrating as a dynamic culture. The solution, Kallen argued, was Zionism, which, by encouraging a new national self-realization, would give the Jewish people a chance to lay in Palestine the foundations of a "new and living Hebraism."⁸

Kallen saw the rebirth of Hebraism going beyond the issue of group survival, however.

To the Jews of the world it [is] . . . a programme of self-help and social justice within Jewry; giving the same rights and responsibilities to both sexes, and actually trying out experiments in economic organization to abolish the exploitation of one man by another without abolishing the impetus towards individual excellence.

To the nations of the world [Hebraism] . . . should carry into effect the social and spiritual ideals of the Hebrew prophets . . . , it [should] re-

5. Kallen to Brandeis, Dec. 20, 1913, August 22, 1914, August 27, 1914. Louis D. Brandeis Collection, Zionist Archives, New York; Brandeis to Kallen, Dec. 22, 1913, Horace M. Kallen Collection, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

6. Interview with me, July, 1972; see also H. M. Kallen, *The Faith of Louis D. Brandeis* (New York, 1943).

7. Kallen's definitive statements on cultural pluralism are in *Culture and Democracy in the United States* (New York, 1924).

8. Many of Kallen's early essays on Zionism and Hebraism are collected in *Judaism At Bay* (New York, 1932).

assert the prophetic ideal of internationalism as a democratic and co-operative federation of nationalities.⁹

This argument had about it some of the same Utopian overtones expressed by earlier American Zionists like Mordecai Noah, who saw a reestablished Jewish state in the Utopian terms not uncommon in pre Civil-War America. But Kallen was reacting to something closer to his own experience, the cumulative impulse for reform in the United States known as the Progressive Movement. He saw that the re-nationalization of the Jewish people would give them an opportunity to start afresh, to create a country based on "their ancient tradition . . . of social justice and fundamental economic democracy." Their entire state could constitute a reform, which, for Kallen, meant primarily economic reform, embodying new concepts of land and resource ownership and control and of economic cooperation. At the same time that the "Hebraic spirit" would be renewed, thereby ensuring the survival of the Jewish people, so, also, would the traditional prophetic ideals have a new opportunity to flourish, making the Jewish state the living embodiment of a free and just social order.

Kallen's Zionist formulations must have sounded particularly attractive to Brandeis, a leader of Progressive reform who was well aware, by 1914, that the impulse for change was waning in the United States. Now, through Zionism, there would be another opportunity to effect Progressive-oriented economic and social reforms in virgin territory, a small country with scattered population, eminently suited for experiment.

Not only did Brandeis accept Kallen's arguments, he responded to them by becoming the leader of the American Zionist movement, from 1914 to 1921. Until after World War II, those seven years under his direction constituted the high point in the history of American Zionism, a period of vast increase in membership, in funds collected, and in community influence and prestige. Instead of remaining one rather ineffective extension of the World Zionist Organization, American Zionism developed emphases of its own. Responding to Kallen's intellectual formulations rather than to the pressures of anti-Semitism, Brandeis-led Zionism rejected the European Zionist definition of Palestine as primarily a haven for the oppressed and adopted, instead, the goal of a Jewish nation that would serve as a model social democracy. Equally important, the Brandeisists reorganized the American Zionist movement to reflect their view that only through efficient management could they achieve the practical realization of their ideals. As Kallen has commented, "In America, the mind and hand are orchestrated and the consequences

9. Kallen, "Zionism and The Struggle for Democracy," *The Nation* (Sept. 23, 1915): 379.

are what the hand produces of what the mind sees or foresees.”¹⁰ Kallen and Brandeis and their “Americanized” Zionist followers became, therefore, “Messianic-pragmatists,” trying to develop Palestine in a disciplined way by established methods which, nevertheless, would conform to the principles of the Utopian society that they hoped to achieve.

The crowning achievement and most succinct expression of this new, “Americanized” Zionism was the Pittsburgh Program, a series of seven principles which expressed the faith of Kallen and of the people whom he influenced to re-order Palestine as a model, democratic Jewish nationality. Though it was never really understood by most of the delegates to the 1918 Zionist convention which adopted it, though most American Jews at the time were unaware of it, and the influential Yiddish press ignored it, though the World Zionist Organization, despite much lobbying on its behalf, never accepted it, nevertheless, the Pittsburgh Program still remains as an ideal of what the Jewish nation might have become almost sixty years ago, in response to the promise of the Balfour Declaration.

Kallen, from his earliest days as a Zionist, had been interested in working out plans to found in Palestine the Utopia that would actualize the principles of the “American Idea,” principles that seemed to have fared better as an expression of the American creed than as the reality of a complex industrial nation.

In Palestine, (he had written to Brandeis in 1913) we aim at a new state and a happier social order. . . . [A] state which from its very beginnings has failed to profit by the difficulties of the past, which repeats . . . the foreseeable and avoidable waste and misery throughout all the industrial forms and the injustice throughout all human relations, is hardly worth aiming at.

In the development of Palestine, as Kallen foresaw it, “social justice” would receive highest priority; this was, for him, as it was later for Brandeis, the primary *raison d'être* of his Zionist commitment.¹¹

The letter so impressed Brandeis that he suggested that Kallen draw up a concrete proposal outlining his views. In August, 1914, on the way to the Extraordinary Conference of Zionists, Kallen submitted his response, a lengthy memorandum which he titled “The International Aspects of Zionism.”¹² The first section included his reasons for believing that Zionism was compatible with Americanism; the second part provided Brandeis with a detailed outline of an ideal society in Zion. The aim of the Zionist organization, as Kallen saw it then, was to establish a state in which the government would facilitate the expression of the

10. Interview with me, August, 1973.

11. Kallen to Brandeis, December 20, 1913, Brandeis Collection, Zionist Archives.

12. Kallen, “The International Aspects of Zionism,” Kallen Collection, American Jewish Archives. The memorandum is dated Aug. 11, 1914; a note on it, in Kallen’s handwriting, adds, “Copy submitted to Mr. Brandeis, August 29, 1914.”

ethnic nationality of the Jewish people—their language, literature, religion, philosophy, art. He suggested, therefore, a centralized international organization to work out “a carefully reasoned plan for the central control of all practical activity in Palestine.” This organization would have five divisions: (1) a ministry of public affairs to be in charge of “the consistent development of the settlement, the establishment of industries, etc.,” (2) a ministry which would apply uniform laws, “so as to maintain the practice of democracy and to avoid economic and social injustice,” (3) a ministry to develop a system of national education from grade school to university; (4) a ministry of public health and (5) a ministry to establish a Bureau of National Art.

For some time, the working out of the implications of this scheme occupied Kallen's mind. In early 1915 he wrote of it to Brandeis and, also, to Felix Frankfurter, who had become an active Zionist through Brandeis' influence, and his concern with developing practical plans for an ideal Jewish nation-to-be underlay much of his own extensive activity for the Zionist organization. In 1917, the entrance of the United States into World War I seemed to precipitate a renewed lease on life for progressive ideas. Starting in late 1917, and continuing into 1918, the Wilson administration proposed several schemes for economic planning; the *New Republic* described the morale of the country as that of a “cooperative commonwealth.” Kallen was not untouched by these developments. In addition, he took seriously what he construed to be the British promise of the November, 1917, Balfour Declaration. It seemed especially appropriate, therefore, to begin to formulate specific programs, along progressive reform lines, to ensure the economically and socially just development of Palestine.¹³

In the spring of 1918, *The Maccabean*, the organ of the American Zionist movement, published “The Constitutional Foundations of the New Zion,” Kallen's definitive description of the structure of the new “commonwealth.”¹⁴ Though Kallen had referred to Marx's ideas with approval as early as 1906, the socialist cast of his own 1918 plans for the Jewish State derived from pre-Marxian varieties of socialism. In particular, Kallen had been influenced by his reading of Robert Owen, a British socialist of the early nineteenth century, who held that the key to human progress was in economic, not political, reform.¹⁵ Owen wished to make the existence of the private landowner and capitalist impossible; his socialism comprised a reorganization of society on the basis of public property, i.e., the common ownership of the land and

13. Kallen to Brandeis, April 9, 1915, Kallen to Frankfurter, April 9, 1915, Kallen Collection, American Jewish Archives; Kallen to Brandeis, April 10, 1915, Brandeis Collection, Zionist Archives

14. Kallen, “Cosntitutional Foundations of the New Zion,” *The Maccabean* (April, May, 1918): 97-100, 127, 129.

15. Kallen to this author, July 22, 1973.

of the machinery of wealth production, communal supervision of the production and distribution of all necessary material goods, and an equitable distribution of wealth. To educate for such a society, in which a sense of trust would replace the spirit of competition, Owen devised a form of child-centered education similar to that of later "progressive" educators; a secularist, he stressed that the future of *the* race rested not in the hands of the Lord, but with the planning of educational authorities.

Kallen felt that in Palestine, a land with "no complicated or immemorial social structures," an area "fully within the limits of control," plans such as Owen's could be put into effect; the Jews would have a great advantage in building a "genuine, creative democracy." By democracy, Kallen had come to mean the "liberation, encouragement and perfection of differences among men, the increase of human individuality and spontaneity, and hence of human cooperation." The "constitutional foundations" that he proposed were designed to achieve this democracy, as he defined it.

In something of a change from his 1914 "International Aspects of Zionism," Kallen, in 1918, compared the function of the state to that of a traffic policeman: "it is to keep the ways of life open to the free movement toward the expression and fulfillment of their natural capacities by individuals and groups." Since "private ownership in community values" and "privilege of any sort" had been the greatest historic causes "of the arrest of the vital movement of the masses of men," the most important function of the state would be to abolish these where they might already exist, and, even more important, to prevent them from arising elsewhere.

Kallen made several concrete suggestions towards this end. He felt that there should be public ownership of "the whole Jewish land," as well as of all natural resources, means of transportation and communication. All of these would be "the inalienable possession of the Jewish people." Individuals or associations undertaking any operation using the land or its resources, including industrial enterprises, would become the tenants and leaseholders of the state. Leases would terminate, as in ancient Israel's "Year of the Jubilee," every 50 years. No tax system would be needed, for the public treasury would accrue enough funds from these leases to finance the needs of the state. Every industrial or agrarian organization would have to be an autonomous, free, cooperative company, in which all of its members would share alike up to a certain minimum, and then beyond this minimum according to their "powers and capacities." Each cooperative unit would join with others of its kind to form a national association of the industry or profession, charged with care for its welfare and progress.

Kallen saw only two fundamental functions for the state, public

defense and education. He defined medicine as "public defense against disease," and proposed that all doctors, hospitals, and schools of medicine be socialized to make the defense against disease "both democratic and effective." The other line of public defense would be against crime and war. Here Kallen suggested the creation of a state's militia, to consist of "young men and young women of whose education this work will be a part." In this way everybody, at one time or another, would have been a policeman and a soldier, and "the menace of a professional police and a military class will have been eliminated."

Kallen, like fellow progressives John Dewey and Randolph Bourne, considered education to be the most vital of all the institutions of society helping "to make or mar the lives of men, to liberate them or to enslave them." He proposed, therefore universal schooling to be financed by the state through the college level, except for those with "conspicuous incapacity." The "school world" would encourage "the freest possible play of the child's individuality;" it would require, also, some period of each school year to be devoted to police and military training, and to service on public works. "Every citizen should share . . . in building the nation's roads, digging the nation's irrigation ditches, shoveling the nation's coal," he wrote. School would mean "participation in the indispensable basic activities of the Commonwealth;" only after school's completion would each student choose for himself "whatever enterprise or profession is desirable or fit."

Kallen provided, also, the plans for the "social control" of the government in his commonwealth. There was to be a President, a parliamentary system on the British model, the use of public referendums, and the administration of various professions and groups by associations of their own members. What was to be most important for social control, however, would be "absolute publicity with respect to all the Commonwealth's affairs;" without it the citizens would be "blind and injustice . . . inevitable."

These proposals did not go uncriticized on the World Zionist scene. In particular, the circle of British Zionists surrounding Chaim Weizmann found the assumptions underlying Kallen's suggestions disturbing and ephemeral; they feared his leap in accepting the premise of a State, and were content to plan for what they considered more realistic possibilities. Kallen was adamant, however, in his insistence on developing Palestine according to ideal plans.

We do not presuppose the early establishment of a Jewish government in Palestine (he wrote to Leon Simon, a leading English Zionist theoretician). What we are concerned with as the initial step is a clear and unmistakable definition of the principle on which any kind of activity must develop. . . . Our views of immediate action are dependent on the principles which we desire to realize in Palestine.¹⁶

16. Kallen to Leon Simon, Sept. 7, 1918, Kallen Collection, American Jewish Archives.

To Stephen Wise, then president of the Zionist Organization of America, he also justified his position.

We must plan with our minds on ultimacies, (he asserted). There is a presumption in the public mind that Zion is to be a state. This presumption can be capitalized into a fact when the time is ripe. . . . For this reason honesty and tactics both require us to stand publicly by the "great program." The English want too little and it is much more dangerous in the present political circumstances to ask too little than to ask too much.¹⁷

Kallen did not want his proposals for a new state to be buried in the pages of a rather obscure Zionist journal. He drew up, also, a declaration of economic and political principles that he hoped would be adopted and implemented by the American Zionist Organization.¹⁸ The form and language of this "Memorandum of the Principles of the Organization of the Jewish Commonwealth in Palestine," written in Kallen's handwriting and dated by him June 17, 1918, make it quite clear that he had the primary role in framing what, in its distilled form, came to be known as the "Pittsburgh Program."¹⁹

A key paragraph in this memorandum expressed well Kallen's messianic-pragmatic view of Zionism:

The Zionist movement has indeed been from its very inception not merely a movement to establish in Palestine for the Jewish people a legally secured homeland under the warrant of public law, the Zionist movement has been from its inception a movement to establish such a homeland on the principles of a social justice that will actually secure to each man his life, his liberty, and his happiness. The prophetic, Talmudical and legal traditions of the Jewish people rest on these principles: economic and social democracy, to be achieved through the proper control of natural resources, and universal education.

Kallen then proposed to the delegates at the Zionist convention that they recommend implementation of this ideal through the national ownership of land and public utilities; a guarantee of political and civil equality, irrespective of race, sex or faith, to all inhabitants of the land; an emphasis on the cooperative principle for all industrial, agricultural, commercial and financial enterprises; a system of free public education, with Hebrew as the medium of Jewish national instruction.

With some minor revision by Brandeis, this is the program that the Convention's delegates adopted.²⁰ The application of these prin-

17. Kallen to Stephen S. Wise, Oct. 20, 1918, Kallen Collection, American Jewish Archives.

18. Kallen to Alfred Zimmern, June 17, 1918, Kallen Collection, American Jewish Archives.

19. Kallen, "A Memorandum on the Principles of Organization of the Jewish Commonwealth in Palestine," Kallen Collection, American Jewish Archives.

20. See Kallen, *Zionism and World Politics* (New York, 1921), p. 300, where he describes his role in the third person, and defines, also, Brandeis' role.

ciples became the cornerstone of the official program of the Zionist Organization of America, but only from 1918 to 1921. At the 1921 convention the majority of delegates, under strong pressure from Chaim Weizmann, felt bold enough to repudiate Kallen's and Brandeis' Americanized Zionism, and the Pittsburgh Program became a victim of this rejection and of the ensuing wholesale resignation of Kallen, Brandeis, and their followers from the Zionist organization.

It is not surprising that the delegates to the 1921 convention, mainly recent immigrants from Europe to the United States, should have used their numerical strength to cast aside the Pittsburgh Program, and the people who formulated it, in favor of Weizmann's program of Diaspora Nationalism. The Pittsburgh Program was the visionary statement of one who measured the worth of Zionism in its extension of the principles of the "American Idea" to the new Jewish nation. But the very fact that Kallen and the people whom he influenced came to Zionism through Americanism distinguished them both from their colleagues abroad and from the majority of American Jews.

Kallen, Brandeis, and an Americanized intellectual elite that they attracted to Zionism had used the cultural pluralism rationale which Kallen had provided to become Zionists as Americans, rather than as Jews. Well established, and secure as Americans, they had no need for Zionism as a cultural or social communal force. They were convinced that the model of economic and social justice which Palestine would become would do more for the status and self-esteem of Diaspora Jews than even the most effective nationalist oriented education or public relations activity.

They misjudged, however, the reaction of the European-oriented Zionists, whose commitment was a response to Jewish tradition and an expression of Jewish culture. These people, themselves busily engaged in establishing new lives in an unfamiliar land, had little sympathy with elaborate plans to build a Jewish state quickly and efficiently into an exemplary "cooperative commonwealth." What they sought from the Zionist organization was the same thing that they sought in the groups of *landsleit* that they formed in great numbers—a way of escaping from the harshness of strangers in finding security through affiliation with a comfortable ethnic group. Since this perception was entirely alien to Kallen and to Brandeis, a split was inevitable.

Though Kallen lost his power as the behind-the-scenes intellectual within the American Zionist movement after the 1921 convention, by no means did he relinquish his dream of building a model community in a new Jewish state. Shortly after his resignation from the Zionist Organization of America he organized the New Palestine Society, a group "of humane men and women who have the fate of the Jewish people at heart and who see in the new Palestine . . . a promise for a better, juster

order in the future.”²¹ Kallen hoped that this group would concentrate its energies on generating ideas and raising money to develop as many self-supporting Jewish settlements in Palestine as possible, with a view towards establishing, as soon as would be feasible, an autonomous Jewish commonwealth. In the “Messianic-pragmatic” mode, he proposed that the group establish a “Palestine Cooperative Trading and Credit Company” to supply Palestine with needed commodities and to encourage the “association of the actual and incoming Jewish population in Palestine into cooperative groups both as buyers and sellers, and as producers.”²²

Kallen has recalled that, after 1921, the Zionist movement in America, in his view, “began to become recessive. . . . Factional differences, organizational politics, replaced very much the overall concern with the major cause, the building of a Jewish state in Palestine.”²³ Gradually, therefore, his interest and energies turned in other directions.

The years that Kallen had spent in the service of the Zionist movement had been important ones. His approach to Zionism gave to the American Zionist movement of the period a uniquely American cast that led first to its rise, and then to its fall. Through his influence on Brandeis, Kallen was able, for a while, to re-make the Zionist movement so that it reflected his “messianic-pragmatic” vision of Zionism and its connection with the ideals of both Hebraism and the “American Idea.” Though, in 1921, his plans seemed irrelevant to the concerns of the current majority of the American Zionist Organization, they left their mark; ultimately, his ideas became important in making Zionism a permissible ethnic outlet for Jews in the United States, one that allowed them to participate on equal terms with other groups of the American pluralistic society and that helped to slow down the rate of assimilation in an open society that encouraged it.

In early 1973, less than a year before his death, he was asked for his evaluation of the impact of the state of Israel on American Jewry. It appears that, until the very end, Horace M. Kallen had remained a Zionist and a “Messianic-pragmatist.”

There are those, (he wrote), who regard Israel as an ideal bet on a future of equal liberty and equal safety under law; . . . a bet which . . . must have the generous support of American Jews as Americans and also as Jews.²⁴

21. *The New Palestine Society: A Brief Statement of Aims and Organization*, Kallen Collection, American Jewish Archives.

22. “Memorandum on the Necessary Contents of the Charter of the (proposed) Palestine Cooperative Trading and Credit Company,” Kallen Collection, American Jewish Archives.

23. Interview with me, July 1972. See also Yonathan Shapiro, *Leadership of the American Zionist Organization* (Urbana, Ill., 1971), pp. 180–181.

24. Kallen, “‘Israel’—Its Impact,” in *The Workmen’s Circle Call* (May, June, 1973): 8.

Poverty and the State in Biblical Thought

JON D. LEVENSON

WAS THERE, IN BIBLICAL ISRAEL, ANYTHING ANALOGOUS to the modern development called the "welfare-state"? If so, what were the assumptions that underlay it, and how do they differ from those of the contemporary democratic, socialist one? What was the place of this Biblical "welfare-state" within the structure of the religious tradition of ancient Israel? Finally, what limitations do these structural concerns impose upon efforts in our day to argue from Biblical society to our own situation? These are the questions which we shall address in our study.

I

The structural question cannot be ignored by the responsible modern exegete or, for that matter, by the rabbi in the pulpit. It is not sufficient merely to cite commandments without a concern for the theological and historical matrix in which they are embedded. The historical dimension is especially important, for, in the religion of Biblical Israel, history is the mother of theology. Unlike the teachings of a philosophical school, Biblical teaching develops as a kind of afterthought in the wake of overwhelming historical experience. Except as we keep in mind the historical self-understanding of the people Israel, we cannot hope to comprehend Biblical beliefs and commandments. The norms that emerge in Israelite tradition must not be confused with those of other traditions, even where their substantive content is identical. To the self-conscious adherent of any moral system, there is a necessary distinction between his own and all other moralities, however similar, because the nature of the vehicle of moral injunction is inextricably linked with the identity and origin of his community. This is even more the case where the community understands itself, as does Israel, to be the result of divine action in history, to be of history, and not simply in history.

What is the self-understanding of Biblical Israel? One passage sums it up so well that it has been termed a "Hexateuch in miniature," that is to say, a germinal statement of the major themes of the narrative in the Torah and Joshua.¹ It is the affirmation which a farmer makes upon offering the first fruits of the season:

1. Gerhard von Rad, *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays*, trans. by E. W. Trueman Dicken (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966), pp. 1-78.

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My ancestor was an Aramean about to die when he went down to Egypt and lived there in meager numbers. But there he became a populous and very powerful nation. The Egyptians dealt harshly with us, oppressed us, and imposed upon us hard labor. We cried to the Lord, the God of our fathers, who heard our plea and saw our plight, our toil and our oppression. The Lord brought us out of Egypt with a strong arm and outstretched hand, awesome power and by signs and portents. He brought us to this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. (Dt. 26:5-9).

Note that, in this confession, Israel sees its origin as being among the poor and oppressed. There is no special national merit, no claim to wealth which is based upon natural right. Instead, life and prosperity are attributed to the act of deliverance by God. Awareness of God here entails awareness of Israel's own poverty, of the death averted only by God's active intervention. Thus, the fundamental self-understanding of Israel gave to the people an indelible sympathy with the poor and abandoned of society, a sympathy which they could lose only at the price of a loss of historical identity. This sympathy extends beyond the bounds of Israelite society even to the point of including the Egyptian:

Do not hold the Egyptian in contempt, for you were an alien in his land. (Dt. 23:8)

This ordinance is all the more remarkable in that Deuteronomy might well have taken the diametrically opposite line, mandating genocide for the descendants of the Egyptians as it does for those of the Amalekites, Israel's next oppressor (Dt. 25:17-19). Instead, Israel's sympathy with the oppressed is here so intense that it does not wish to have its own fate imposed even upon the oppressors. It did not require a "New Israel" to show the world how to renounce the ethic of retaliation.

The social legislation of Israel reflects this aspect of historical experience. Rather than provide a comprehensive view of the laws of the Torah which protect the poor against the rich, let me cite a few examples. Already in the "Book of the Covenant" (Ex. 20:22-23:33), which Biblical scholars who are attuned to the composite nature of texts consider to be Israel's earliest law, it is forbidden to exact interest from a poor man, and if one takes a neighbor's garment in pledge, it must be returned before sundown. Otherwise, "in what else shall he sleep?" (Ex. 22:24-26). In the "Holiness Code" (Lev. 17-26), a compendium of laws compiled, most likely, by the Temple priesthood, it is forbidden to glean the corners of the field, which must be left for the poor and the resident alien (Lev. 19:9-10) and, in the case of the Deuteronomic Law Code (Dt. 12-26), for the orphan and widow as well (Dt. 24:19-22). The Deuteronomic Code, which came into prominence in the generation before the Exile,² also extends the old provisions so as to include the urban day-

2. For a sound exposition of the problems in Deuteronomy and most of the solutions, see E. W. Nicholson, *Deuteronomy and Tradition* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1967).

laborer of its own time. Thus, it speaks not only of the poor, especially the debtor, and the dispossessed, but also of the rights of the working man over and against his employer (*e.g.*, Dt. 24:14-15). It even goes so far as to forbid the return of fugitive slaves (Dt. 23:16-17)!

I have already mentioned one factor which underlies this humanistic tendency—the fact that the Exodus was the prime experience in Israel's self-understanding. There is a second, which chronologically follows the first. The Canaan into which Israel entered was a land of city-states organized according to feudal norms. These city-states were monarchies upheld by armies of charioteers. Israel was not a monarchy, but a mixed multitude with no allegiance to the existing political regimes. The Canaanite sources of the same period, the Late Bronze Age (ca. 1500-1200 B.C.E.) speak of very similar groups, the Hapiru, chronic trouble-makers of the time, and it is hard not to relate them both phonologically and historically to the Hebrews.³ In other words, the Israelites defined themselves not only in opposition to the great empire of Pharaonic Egypt, but, also, against the highly centralized and bureaucratized states that they were to dispossess. The emergence of Israel was a threat to the monarchic principle and, more importantly, a threat even to the idea of the state as the source of law. Israel was not a state like the Canaanite states, but, rather, a collection of riff-raff (*erev rav*, Ex. 12:38) without a central government, a capital city, a professional army, a class of charioteers. It was a group of alienated peasants with no stake in the stratification of Canaanite society. One senses this critical difference in those narratives which speak of Israel's begging the kings of the Edomites and of the Amorites for permission to pass through, never deviating, of course, from the "King's Highway" (Num. 20:14-21; 21:21-25). How such a group came to overwhelm the city-states is an issue that historians of the ancient Semitic world debate. Israel's own confessional answer was that God was fighting in their behalf. No army could withstand the onslaught of the heavenly army (*z'va YHWH*, [Jos. 5:14]). When God fights for a people, they should, as Moses admonishes them (Ex. 14:14), hold their peace. Thus, this idea of divine warfare which could demolish any earthly army gave Israel a profound distrust of mere human warriors and their pitiful weapons.⁴ In fact, numerous Biblical poems assert the superiority of faith in God over trust in one's own arsenal, as for example:

3. A good, popular discussion of the Hapiru problem can be found in John Bright, *A History of Israel*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1972), pp. 92-94. See, also, the creative interpretation of George E. Mendenhall, "The Hebrew Conquest of Palestine," *Biblical Archaeologist* 25 (1962): 66-87; rpt. in E. F. Campbell, Jr., and D. N. Freedman, eds., *The Biblical Archaeologist Reader* 3 (Garden City: Anchor, 1970), pp. 100-120.

4. On divine warfare, see Patrick Miller, *Holy War and Cosmic War in Early Israel*, Harvard Semitic Monographs, 5 (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1973).

A king is not delivered by a large force,
 Nor is a warrior saved by great strength.
 The horse is a false hope for deliverance,
 Strong as it is, it provides no escape.
 Truly, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear him,
 Who wait for his faithful care,
 To save them from death,
 To keep them alive in famine.
 We wait for the Lord,
 Our help and our shield is he.
 For in him our hearts rejoice,
 For in his holy name we trust.
 May your faithful care, O Lord, be with us,
 As we have put our hope in you. (Ps. 33:16-22)

Psalms 147 is no less explicit:

Not the strength of the horse does he prize,
 Not in the thighs of men does he take pleasure.
 The Lord takes pleasure in those who fear him,
 Who wait for his faithful care. (Ps. 147:10-11)

The people Israel, then, not only lacked a state, but lived in a certain tension with the structures of statehood, which they saw as transient and without soteriological significance; they could not save. This is not to say that Israel was other-worldly or a-political. On the contrary, the covenant itself is an idea adopted from the world of diplomacy, where its closest formal analogues are to be found.⁵ In the Sinaitic covenant, Israel became God's vassal and God became Israel's sovereign. Yet the relationship that was thus sealed was not between two states, as is the case in the analogous treaties, but between a ruler and his own subjects. In other words, the covenant is both a kind of treaty (a document specifying the terms of relationship between parties) and a kind of law code (a document which regulates the relationships between men within a single society). Thus, Israel's theology is intensely political, or, I should prefer to say, theopolitical, for, in Israel's case alone, the act of accepting the covenant was an acclamation of God's kingship. In the words of an early poem:

Torah Moses commanded for us,
 The heritage of the congregation of Jacob.
 Then [the Lord] became king in Jeshurun,
 When the heads of the people assembled,
 The assembly of the tribes of Israel. (Dt. 33:4-5)

We have already seen that the concept of God as warrior is a judgment upon human armies. Now we see that God as king is a judgment on human monarchies. In fact, for Israel, the vassal of God, human politics becomes immensely problematic. If God is king, what use is there for a human king? If God rules, what would a king do? Would he not, like

5. The best popular account of covenant is Delbert R. Hillers, *Covenant: The History of a Biblical Idea* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins, 1969).

the arrogant and foolish Canaanite kings, be an insult to God and His rule? These are not contradictions dreamt up in some modern theologian's book-lined study. On the contrary, they were very crucial issues in early Israel, the Israel of the twelve-tribe league. You may recall the remark of the "judge" Gideon when offered kingship:

Gideon said to them, "I shall not reign over you, nor shall my son reign over you, but the Lord shall reign over you." (Ju. 8:22)

And when the Israelites, disgusted with their unique theopolitical situation, demand a king "like all the nations" (*kekhol hagoyim*, [1 Sam. 8:5]), God comforts a spurned and disheartened Samuel by telling him:

They have not rejected you; they have rejected me from being their king. (1 Sam. 8:7)

The idea is simple, but pregnant with meaning for the future of Israel's thought; in fact, for the future of the whole West. Divine kingship and human kingship are incompatible. Human statehood is an affront to divine rule, an act of rebellion against the sovereign with whom Israel is in covenant.

Now do you see why the laws of Israel are addressed to the individual or the clan, but almost never to the bureaucrat or the king distinctively? Early Israel felt a profound reluctance to accept the institution of human kingship, a reluctance not apparent among the contemporaneous peoples of the Syro-Palestinian world and in very sharp contradiction with Mesopotamian, Anatolian, and Egyptian experience. Israel remembered vividly being a people before being a kingdom, a sacral state (*mamlekhet kohanim ve-goy kadosh*, [Ex. 19:6]) before a human state. The Israelites had their laws before they had a central bureaucracy; and that bureaucracy would most likely be an intrusion into what some traditions considered to be the pristine relationship between God and Israel in the wilderness, the era before the settlement in the Land of Israel, when the people Israel "walked behind me in the desert, in a land unsown" (Jer. 2:2). In Israel, all law is considered part of that pure and direct relationship. All Israelite law makes the claim to be divine revelation. In none of the law codes is the human king the law-maker. Here the contrast with the Semitic parallels is very strong, adding much to our understanding of the Bible. Thus, Hammurabi (18th century B.C.E.), of the First Dynasty of Babylon, announces in the prologue of his celebrated code:

When Marduk commissioned me to guide the people aright to direct the land,
I established law and justice in the language of the land thereby promoting the welfare of the people. (V, 12-21)⁶

6. This translation is taken from James B. Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, 3rd ed., (Princeton: Princeton University, 1969), p. 165.

As was to be the case in the Biblical monarchies, the deity appoints the king. The god Marduk commissions Hammurabi, but Hammurabi gives the law. In Babylon, the state is the source of the law. In early Israel, the state is an affront to the law. In Babylon, human kingship is the great organizing principle of society. As we have seen, this was not the case in early Israel, where rule by God (theocracy) is a better description of the situation. Of course, in the real world of politics, theocracy is unworkable, as the Israelite tribal league was to learn in the eleventh century through a series of devastating defeats at the hands of the Philistines. The urgent need for a central military command more permanent than could be provided by the charismatic "judges" gave rise to the tragic kingship of Saul (1 Sam. 4-31). This concession to worldly necessity was never revoked, but prophets and psalmists continued to sing of the day when God would assume dominion over his people, ruling either through his messiah (*e.g.*, Ezek. 34) or directly, without human assistance (*e.g.*, Ps. 96). In sum, Israel did not forget its youth, but continued to pray for the day when the present order of things would pass away and the reign of God would be manifest and inviolable.

The laws which protect the poor, then, are addressed to the individual and the clan, the local, highly organic unit of social organization. These laws are, thus, religious commandments, rather than state policy. They are obligations established by God and owed directly to the poor and not to the government as a mediator between rich and poor. Rather, that mediator is God, whose control of history sets right the sinful relationships in society, one of which, incidentally, is the arrogance of human government. The laws mandate a special benevolence for the down-trodden, a benevolence which is one of God's central passions. According to Ps. 146, the God of Jacob

Secures justice for the oppressed,
Gives food to the starving,
The Lord sets captives free,
The Lord opens the eyes of the blind,
The Lord straightens up those who are bent over,
The Lord loves the righteous,
The Lord watches over the alien,
To orphan and widow he gives courage. (Ps. 146:7-9)

This concern for the poor, the widow, the orphan, the alien, and all other helpless people is well-known also in extra-Biblical literature, where, especially in Canaanite epics, it is a duty of the human king. To be sure, Biblical thought, too, hopes that the earthy ruler will be just and compassionate, while the prophets praised those who were so and condemned those who were not (*e.g.*, Jer. 22). In fact, it may well have been customary for the king, perhaps at his coronation, formally to promise just such behavior (Ps. 101). Still, Biblical thought does not tend

toward optimism about earthly governments. The psalm cited above prefaces the section that is quoted with the warning:

Put not your trust in princes,
In mere man who cannot save.
His breath departs;
He returns to the dust.
On that day his plans come to nothing. (Ps. 146:3-4)

Thus, Biblical thought mandates, but does not expect, the abolition of poverty within history. Instead, it expects that these commandments of generosity will continue in force, that they will not triumph over the need for them. This curious relationship between generosity and poverty is succinctly put in Deuteronomy, where it is commanded that there shall be no poor and yet predicts that there will be:

There shall be among you no needy, for the Lord will bless you in the land which the Lord your God gives you as an hereditary allotment. (Dt. 15:4)

But seven lines later, we read:

For there will never cease to be needy persons in your land. (Dt. 15:11)

This is not a justification of the *status quo*. On the contrary, the same line continues:

That is why I command you: You must open your hand to the poor and needy kinsman in your land. (Dt. 15:11-)

The existence of poverty, then, is not due simply to the negligence of one generation. It is systemic. Even the best mortal government will not eliminate it. Something in human nature, something in the way that men relate to each other in their collectivities, produces poverty, even where intentions are the best. Cynicism or asceticism is not the Biblical answer to this dilemma. For, although we cannot end poverty, we can diminish it; we can help some poor man get by, perhaps not for his lifetime, but at least for a day, or for one meal, or for part of one meal. God has given us both the commandments and the disheartening context in which they make sense. The commandment does not eliminate the context, but neither does the continuation of the context render the commandment pointless. In the words of Rabbi Tarfon (d. 135 C.E.), "It is not up to you to complete the work, but neither are you free to desist from it" (*Avot* 2:21).

The relationship between the poor and poverty is a curious one. God loves the poor but hates poverty. To be sure, there is a profound issue here, one which Judaism shares with Marxism and those streams in Christianity which neither disparage material wealth nor idealize poverty. Judaism, Marxism and these streams in Christianity all affirm a special redemptive role for the poor which is not fulfilled so long as they exist. Or, to put the paradox in other words, these three systems of thought

are fond of the poor, so fond as to be committed to their disappearance. They attribute a corrupting property to wealth yet wish more people had it. The era in which the poor shall disappear without becoming crass and exploitative is eschatological (occurring at the end of time), or, in the case of Biblical thought, if not eschatological, at least owing to the direct intervention of God into the human arena. There are two reasons for this. First, the eschatological era is the time of justice, when God sets straight the inequities which define historic existence. It is, in Biblical thought, at the end of time (which prophets always considered very near) that we shall learn the meaning of innocent suffering, when we see the whole pattern of which history, so far, is a fragment. Second, because historic existence is perverse, because the order of existence in this world is somehow askew, the final act of God means a radical realignment of proportions. This, in turn, means that those on the bottom of the social order will rise. In fact, this commitment to a radical transformation of proportions, to a victory of God over nature and history, is one of the things for which God is especially praised in hymnic literature, as in the Song of Hannah:

The bow of the warrior is shattered,
 But those who faltered gain new strength.
 Those who were full of bread sell themselves for a crust,
 But the hungry grow fat.
 The barren woman has given birth to seven children,
 But the mother of many sons languishes.
 The Lord kills and brings to life,
 Sends down to the underworld, and brings back up;
 The Lord makes poor and rich,
 Cuts down and raises up.
 He lifts the poor out of the dust,
 From the dunghill he raises the needy,
 To give them a place among princes,
 To make them possess a glorious throne. (1 Sam. 2:4-8)

If this sounds like the "Dictatorship of the Proletariat," there is surely an analogy with Marxist eschatology. Still, we must not lose sight of the theistic nature of Hannah's hymn. It does not speak of a practical political program. The transformation it describes is not effected through any human agency. There is apparently no social group whose hands are so clean that it can accomplish a final and complete victory of justice, a decisive triumph of the "good impulse" (*yezer ha-tov*) over the "evil impulse" (*yezer ha-ra*) which, the rabbis held, co-existed in each of us. The poor in this poem do not fight their way into a place with the princes, nor do the princes or their bureaucracies altruistically reform the society so as to accomplish that goal. Rather, it is God, standing to some extent apart from nature and from history, creating nature and its laws and guiding history, who grants the poor their new place of honor. His doing so is part of a transformation of the very structure of existence

so as to accomplish what is impossible in human history. When God sets the poor on glorious thrones, he also enables weaklings to defeat warriors, barren women to give birth, and even the dead to rise from the underworld. Poverty is obviously deeply rooted in the structure of human existence and its elimination is, in such thinking, a veritable miracle. Only with the abolition of human government as man has always known it can the poor ascend to the rank of princes. Only with that decisive divine conquest of the sinners—and that is everybody—do the poor come into their own. In the words of Psalm 37: •

A little longer, and there will be no wicked man;
 You will look carefully at his place, and he will not be there.
 For the meek shall inherit the earth,
 And delight in abundant peace. (Ps. 37:10-11)

Until the meek inherit the earth, they must be protected from the rich and powerful. The laws of charity and of employment, some of which have been referred to, provide some protection from the rich. What about protection from the powerful, principally, the central government? This (as well as protection from the rich) is afforded in the laws of the inalienability of land, which prohibit the final sale of land outright (Lev. 25:23-24). Such laws served to limit the expanse of government at the expense of the governed. In this connection, we must not forget the story of Naboth, the farmer of the Northern Kingdom who refused to sell his ancestral property to King Ahab (1 Kings 21). In cases like this, the traditional law of the inalienability of land provided the humble peasant with protection against a hungry central government. To circumvent such strictures, the government had to resort to confiscatory taxation, something which the traditionalist had good reason to fear. His fear, in fact, is seen quite clearly in Samuel's speech to the people as they demand a king, and he cites the greediness of the central royal administration as one reason to retain the old way:

Your fields, vineyards, and good olive orchards he will take to give to his aides. (1 Sam. 8:13)

This resistance to centrally dictated taxation as a means of redistributing wealth played a significant role in Israelite history a few generations after Samuel's prescient admonition when Solomon's tactless son, Rehoboam, refused to relent on the issue of the amount of *corvée* owed by the North (1 Kings 12), thus bringing about the secession of the northern tribes. Later, this refusal to grant supreme economic hegemony to the royal administration was a major factor in sustaining the prophetic movement. In large measure, prophetic critique of the state depended upon the existence of private property. Fortunately for the prophetic institution, in Israel the Temple was not the great landlord and employer that it was in Mesopotamia and in Egypt. Even in Israel,

the tendency toward centralization of wealth and power had to be continually checked. Constant vigilance was the price of maintaining a private sector which could afford to criticize the state. Thus, in the document which is the closest to a constitution for theopolitical Israel, the program of restoration of the School of Ezekiel (Ezek. 40-48), the economic basis of the central administration is sharply limited (Ezek. 46:16-18). No true prophet could wish it otherwise. You cannot bite for long the hand that feeds you. Here it is essential to remember that prophets were men of flesh and blood, who had to support themselves. Exactly how they did so is less clear than we should like, but a few passages give us some hints toward an answer. Elisha, who anointed the revolutionary (Jehu) who destroyed the dynasty of Omri, was given a combination bedroom/office in the home of a wealthy landowner in Shunem (2 Kings 4:8ff.). And Jeremiah became a landowner during his prophetic career (Jer. 32:6-15), although the real worth of his estate is unknown. The prophets were not men and women of great wealth—though one can wonder about Isaiah—but they did benefit from traditions of law which denied the state the right to determine the wealth of the private individual. Their ideal is summed up nicely by Micah, who has a vision in which:

Each man shall dwell under his own vine,
Under his own fig-tree,
And there shall be none to terrify him. (Micah 4:4)

Here, the ideal society is one of small free-holders, dependent upon neither the rich nor the government. Is it any wonder that Elijah predicted the vindication of Naboth (1 Kings 21:17-28)?

II

To the committed Jew, the question of welfare and the state in the Bible has more than antiquarian significance. To be sure, the historical inquiry is intrinsically interesting and, at least to the author's not unbiased mind, spiritually invigorating as well. Still, the recovery and investigation of the ancient context cannot answer the question of whether the Biblical material retains a capacity to speak to contemporary problems, whether it is more than purely an artifact of culture with which one may, or may not, be in sympathy. A full answer to the very large question of how the believing Jew should regard the development of the modern welfare-state lies outside of the scope of this study. Still, it is in order to give a few brief points that may help to guide those who do address contemporary issues.

(1) It is essential to recognize at the start that ethics is no substitute for substantive policy. Any number of contrasting public policies can all be ethical. One cannot cite an ethical injunction as a simple endorse-

ment of any social program, tempting though it may be to do so. Every such program confronts us with hard decisions about economic issues, which a life of study of the Bible cannot begin to answer. Thus, Jews must never be allowed to forget that the Bible mandates a special concern for the poor, but their teachers must also remember that the advocates of many dozens of contemporary programs can all claim with complete sincerity to manifest such a concern. There are advocates of the welfare-state who have only their own self-interest at heart, and there are opponents of the welfare-state who have the interest of the poor uppermost in their minds. Ethics is neither irrelevant to policy nor a substitute for it.

(2) We cannot translate the intensely theocentric social thought of the Bible into the terms of contemporary secular, democratic society without grave distortion. It is not valid to cite commandments without concern for the larger theological context which we have explored. Biblical norms are rarely presented as universal, timeless values (and are not necessarily such even when so presented), but, instead, must usually be seen as part of the historical God-Israel relationship. It is essential not to skip lightly over the immense problems that this distinction entails. To give only one example, it is very problematic whether one can make an analogy between Israel's central government, which was a monarchy, and the elected central government of a modern democracy. We live in a time when a-historical exegesis is simply indefensible.

(3) This theocentric perspective means that we must be prepared for demands to be made upon us which a secular, anthropocentric view would consider absurd. In other words, we are the heirs to a tradition which did not discard the Torah when its immediate social context became passé precisely because the tradition saw the Torah as revelation. Revelation, as Abraham learned through the *akedah* (Gen. 22), is not always identical with reason and conscience. As faithful Jews, we must hold fast to the Torah, but as men of integrity and Jews as well, we must also pay heed to reason and conscience. Our reading of sacred texts is, in part, shaped by our values, but our values are, in part, shaped by our reading of sacred texts. There is no abstract resolution of this tension. We must not forget that most of the world does not share it.

(4) We must not lose sight of the eschatological dimension to Biblical religion, wherein the future is partly the accomplishment of man and partly the work of God. Thus, we cannot expect any given social order to be the last word. History always outruns our expectations in a way which should make us humble in whatever we are building, simultaneously hopeful and fearful about the end of things. In a certain way, we long for the end of history, for history in the Bible is the history of sin and suffering. But we must also fear the end of history, for the end of

history is not only promise, but judgment, not only restoration into divine favor, but also the punishment which must precede restoration, if it is to come at all. The prophet Amos makes this point beautifully:

Alas, you who long for the day of the Lord,
What will the day of the Lord mean to you?
It will be darkness, not light.

The day of the Lord is darkness, not light,
A day of gloom with no dawn. (Amos 5:18, 20)

This recalls the death of Yohanan ben Zakkai, leader of Palestinian Jewry after the destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E. To the surprise of his disciples, who knew him to be a righteous man, he wept as death approached. "Before me," he explained to them, "lie two paths, one to the Garden of Eden [Heaven] and one to the Valley of Hinnom [Hell], and I do not know upon which I shall be taken. Should I not weep?" (*B. Berakhot* 28b). In short, if human history is more than any individual or group intends, then, surely, in total history, human and divine, this is even more the case. No practical political program can claim to be the final resolution of the problems of human wealth and human government. We are not free to desist from the advancement of justice. But neither should we let ourselves fall into the self-righteous delusion that we are about to complete the work.

Ethnicity and American Society

Review-Essay by DAVID J. SCHNALL

Ethnicity in the United States. By ANDREW GREELY. John Wiley and Sons, Inc., New York, 1974. 347 pp. \$14.95.

The Ethnic Factor. By MARK LEVEY and MICHAEL KRAMER. Simon and Inc., New York, 1972. \$7.95.

I. Introduction

ETHNICITY, THE SUM TOTAL OF ONE'S RELIGIOUS, national, cultural and racial background, is a topic that has gained considerable prominence in the media during the past decade. To belong to an ethnic group, to identify with it actively—almost vociferously—and jealously to guard its integrity has been underlined as a social given. The 40s and 50s may have been the decades of faceless, “gray-flanneled” assimilators into what David Reisman has termed the “lonely crowd” and Daniel Bell described as the “end of ideology.” The 60s and 70s, however, have witnessed at least the rhetorical return of the sectarian, group-minded individual whose values seem romantically united with an ethnic culture from which he may be several generations removed.

Not only in popular circles has this perspective been forwarded. In scholarly and academic areas as well, much “ethnic movement” has been evident in course offerings, programs and departments of ethnic studies, scholarly essays and papers, as well as whole volumes dedicated to the subject. Indeed, several new journals have been launched which deal with specific ethnic cultures as well as with ethnicity per se.

Of the two volumes under discussion here, Andrew Greeley's *Ethnicity in the United States* is clearly of the scholarly variety. Its author is meticulous in his methodology, clear in his hypothesis and guarded in his conclusions, all essential qualities in social scientific literature. As director of Chicago's Center for the Study of Pluralism, he has had long experience dealing with such data. In addition, he has had access to various materials tabulated by the University of Michigan's celebrated Survey Research Center and the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago. Further, as a Jesuit Priest, Greeley has an additional advantage in terms of insight, intuition and analysis.

The second volume, Mark Levey and Michael Kramer's *The Ethnic Factor*, is a good deal less academic—both substantively and structurally. Using data collected from 2,000 electoral districts, the authors have concentrated their analysis specifically upon the role of ethnicity in

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national and regional voting patterns. Leaving a rigorous definition of ethnicity to others, Levey and Kramer have summarily chosen six groups, the Irish, Italians, Jews, Poles, Blacks and Hispanics, and studied them individually in terms of their group membership. More popularly written than Greeley's work, the Levey-Kramer volume was evidently organized and conceptualized for a less sophisticated reading audience. Nevertheless, its conclusions are often provocative and suggestive beyond the immediate context within which they were defined.

11. *Theoretical Considerations*

There are several difficulties in attempting to analyze ethnicity in either a political or social milieu. One is the matter of categorization. The specifics of ethnic identification are often intangible and largely impressionistic. For example, should membership in a given racial group—oriental, black, etc.—necessarily eliminate religious or national categorization? Thus, are blacks to be lumped together in one national sampling or are there significant differences between Black Baptists and Black Catholics, or American Blacks and Haitian Blacks? More important, are these differences worth studying?

Religious group membership, too, has often overruled salient characteristics of lesser prominence. In dealing with Jews, for example, the usual practice is to group them as one without reference to their national or cultural background. This, of course, flies in the face of distinct differences between East and West European Jews as well as between Jews of European descent as a whole and those of African, Mid-Eastern or Asian nationality.

It is important to understand that these problems of categorization are not merely theoretical issues. There may still be parts of the world where ethno-racial groups are "pure," in the sense that they share essentially the same histories and culture. Under such circumstances, variables other than race, religion and nationality will be of significance, as in the distinctions between north Italians and their southern countrymen. Of course, it is no coincidence, even here, that such northerners are more likely to be urban, Protestant and blond than are southern Italians.

In a polyglot society such as Urban America's, however, the cross-currents are more pronounced. They may be reflected in internal conflict within the particular group—as between Cubans and Puerto Ricans or *Yahudim* and *Ost-Juden*. They may equally be reflected in the loss of distinctive qualities either by voluntary self-assimilation or by the coarse assumptions of outsiders. If, for example, everyone believes that all Hispanics are alike, and treats them as if they were, then it may make little sense to maintain the differences that do exist. Obviously, the reality will be far more complex.

The question of categorization begs the further and more profound question of theoretical definition, i.e., which groups "deserve" the title "ethnic" and what, in fact, constitutes an ethnic group. Usually, the intuitive or popularly accepted identification of a group as being "ethnic" is sufficient to make it a valid subject of study, as is clearly the case in the Levey-Kramer text. Though they develop the link between ethnicity and politics in an introductory essay dealing with democratic theory and philosophy, the authors take for granted the universal acceptance, let alone wisdom and precision, of their subject choices. More candidly, they simply ignore the issue.

The problem of definition has elicited several interesting responses. Some, for instance, have argued that there is no justification for the monopoly that recent immigrants and non-Whites seem to have upon the ethnic realm (pity the poor WASP). They have studied White Protestants as a group and have discerned important status differentials among various denominations. These, it is claimed, are a manifestation of ethnicity as well. Indeed, Greeley has done as much. In his formulation, however, the White Protestant is often taken as the personification of the American norm . . . the ethnic antithesis. Other groups are erroneously judged in terms of their comparison with White Protestants who soon cross the line from bench-mark to whipping-boy as the descendants of several immigrant groups surpass them socio-economically. Though Greeley might have done better to compare all groups with a general or weighted mean, one senses that here he has "an ax to grind."

In neither volume is the essential issue of definition confronted sufficiently and, certainly, no conclusive statements are made in this regard. Perhaps it is not incorrect to state that ethnicity is no more than a "we feeling" on the part of group members who gain little more than largely spiritual and nostalgic satisfactions from affiliation. To assign any more conscious motivations may be unwarranted at this time.

One is thus confronted with the essential issue facing all those who enter this field of study: what is ethnicity? Is it only an emotional attachment based upon a cultural past or ought it also have contemporary significance? Should it be displayed and studied in terms of vague nostalgia, by means of demographic data and familial practices or through conscious affiliation? While these questions should not inhibit study and analysis, they must be more clearly confronted than they are in either Greeley's or Levey and Kramer's work.

III. *The Sociological Context*

The most important contributions that these volumes make are clearly in terms of the wealth of sociological, political and demographic data they they present. Much of it is interesting and relevant, some is

of only passing significance and a bit is esoteric. Nevertheless, in both works the material is presented in a lively, readable and clearly comprehensible fashion, though at times Greeley's style tends to be somewhat overly "social-scientific" and laden with jargon.

Essentially, the Levey-Kramer text concentrates on the result of ethnic identification in electoral terms, i.e., the vote. It deals, therefore, with many stereotypes and political assumptions, some of which are deflated by the data. For example, despite considerable and vocal attempts to move them otherwise, Jewish voters still tend to be far more liberal than others and, with few exceptions, as liberal as they have always been. Irish voters emerge as least likely to vote en bloc for any candidate and as much less strongly identified with the Democratic Party than has been traditionally believed.

Ironically, Levey and Kramer find the converse to be true of Italians and Slavs, the prototypes of the American "hard-hat" and "lower middle-class" laborer. It is often assumed that they represent a hard-core of conservative, if not Republican, voters despite their traditional union orientations. The data, however, reveals that Italians are still more likely than not to vote for the Democratic candidates though their political attitudes are somewhat less than enthusiastically Democratic. Slavic voters are more likely to vote Republican, though by no means overwhelmingly so.

The primary point made in this volume about the "minority" voters, i.e., the Blacks and Hispanics, has been made time and again by Nathan Glazer and James Wilson: it is difficult to tabulate and to analyze the "minority" vote because, by and large, members of these communities do not vote regularly. In areas outside of the South they generally identify, and vote, with the Democratic Party, when they do vote. This is true in national elections in the South as well, though the generally one-party nature of local elections makes inference very difficult. In methodological terms, one must question the wisdom of studying Chicanos and Puerto Ricans together (as Levey and Kramer do) as an oversimplification. There are simply too many significant differences between them.

After studying the political propensities and electoral proclivities of each of the six groups, Levey and Kramer then embark on a highly speculative essay describing the role that the ethnic vote may play in Presidential elections. Their argument is not a new one. Given the fact that the electoral college (i.e., its distribution of votes) is skewed in favor of the urban-industrial states, and that most ethnic groups tend to reside in such areas, they may play an inordinate role in electing the president, far out of proportion to their numbers.

While this point is both well-taken and well-known, it is doubtful that it has as much strength as the authors imply. The ethnic voter is by no means a member of a monolithic bloc, nor will he respond con-

sistently to purely ethnic appeals. Equally, the universal nature of the media, on which candidates must rely, will not allow blatant or even subtle appeals to specific group needs. This is not to deny the importance of ethnicity or its influence on the vote, but, rather, to question the validity of the role that Levey and Kramer assign to it.

While the Levey-Kramer work does much to describe and document the influence of ethnicity in voting, it does little to explain this influence or to compare it to cognate areas of study outside of the electoral arena. Though one cannot blame the authors for omitting that which they never intended to include, one can be gratified that such material is abundantly evident in Greeley's volume. There, not only is the broad spectrum of political data presented, but a wealth of sociological material is to be found as well. In fact, the thrust of the analysis shifts from politics, *per se*, to ethnicity, and the former is studied as simply one of the important manifestations of the latter.

Greeley is especially interested in the relative success that a group has had in adapting to American society. Part of this success is measured in economic terms. Apparently, Irish Catholics, Jews and Orientals are the wealthiest of the ethnic groups. Blacks and Hispanics have the youngest population, a fact that is significant in terms of unemployment and civil unrest, while Jews and Irish Catholics are the best educated. Greeley's conclusion is that these differences cannot be explained in terms of area of residence (urban or rural) socio-economic status or even religion by itself. In other words, ethnicity seems to have a salience all its own.

Not content simply to describe such social and political differences, Greeley sets out to explain them in an exhaustive study of personal, social and cultural values, a difficult proposition, to be sure. It is here that he is his most creative and, at the same time, his weakest. He studies life-styles, values of family and child-rearing, views of life, morals and social ideology (fatalistic, moralistic, activist, etc.). He concludes, for example, that Irish Catholic families tend to be highly conforming and moralistic environments for personal development, while Italian ones tend to be centers of authoritarianism and anxiety.

This study of values is also carried into the political realm where Greeley creates sophisticated models of political "style." Here he postulates, for example, that the Polish Catholic vote is most significantly related to the extent of the voters' psychological involvement in the campaign, while Italian and Irish Catholic voters are more likely to be influenced by their respective party affiliations.

Even intra-familial relations are subjected to Greeley's searching analysis. He finds Italian females to be much closer to their mothers than are their Jewish counterparts. The former are more likely, conse-

quently, to espouse the traditional role for females while the latter are more likely to experiment with their roles. Both are equally confident of their attractiveness and their appeal to males.

While the creative aspects of such analyses are evident, the weaknesses are inherent. Methodologically, Greeley does not strive for the same levels of scientific control in his sample. Indeed, it is very difficult to control for salient variables in testing such delicate areas as personal values and family practices. It is hard to tell where these values come from and how they influence the respondents. It is hard to test objectively such factors as the quality of a mother-daughter relationship or perceptions of attractiveness. It is too easy for the analyst to inject his own values in the manner of his analysis and it may well be biased by its very nature, i.e., what ought to be a "good" mother-daughter relationship? By its very definition, ethnic and cultural diversity requires a multiplicity of life-styles and world-views, each one legitimate and, perhaps, inscrutable unto itself.

Equally, there is again the problem of conceptualization and definition. It is not easy to determine what are the components of ethno-cultural values. Thus, even if it can be discerned that family life and social processes differ by ethnic groups, understanding the motivations and the implications of these differences is quite a difficult matter. Of necessity, one's conclusions must be vague and amorphous, as Greeley's often are. Through no fault of his own, Greeley often leaves the reader unsatisfied and with the feeling that something is being missed. Once again, this may be simply a function of the "soft" nature of the subject, but to assign the differences to ethnicity is insufficient and may, in fact, hide more than it explains.

It should be noted that these issues need not lead one to decry the research that Greeley has done nor are they meant necessarily to criticize his work. The questions that are raised are merely meant to point out the difficulties in undertaking such analysis and the problems in interpreting findings based upon it. *Le-fum za-arrah agraph.*

IV. *The Jewish Position*

Given the special interests of this author and the journal in which this essay appears, it would be derelict not to devote some time to the findings and inferences in each volume relevant to the American Jewish community, especially in the light of what appear to be major upheavals over domestic and international political issues, rates of intermarriage and assimilation, and the general quality of American Jewish life. In the face of these alleged changes it is interesting—and perhaps a bit relieving—to hear both Levey and Kramer as well as Greeley tell us that things are much the same as before.

In the electoral arena, the former assure us that Jewish voters are still overwhelmingly liberal—by traditional definitions—and tied to the Democratic Party. In every section of the country, in national as well as state and local elections, no matter what the prevailing trends, this general finding emerges. Jewish voters consistently support the liberal candidate (usually a Democrat), back programs for social welfare and civil rights, and score higher on tests of concern for the poor, the underprivileged and the minorities even when these activities appear to operate contrary to their immediate self-interests. It is instructive to note that, despite McGovern's alleged "radicalism" and weakness on Israel, he was able to garner the vast majority of Jewish votes in the 1972 Presidential election, and that some fifty per cent of the contributions to the Democratic National Committee in 1972 came from Jewish pockets.

This data is presented cogently and in a lively manner, but little conceptualization is evident in its organization. Levey and Kramer do little to explain the persistent phenomenon of Jewish liberalism nor do they adequately discuss the possibilities for Jewish realignment and re-direction. Perhaps description is considered sufficient, but, without analysis, the necessary context is missing that would give meaning to the data. Such questions as the influence of factors like place of residence, income, education and occupational status are never discussed. "Jews" are simply lumped together and treated as if their ethnic identification were all the explanation that is necessary. Clearly, it is not.

Greeley's development of Jewish trends, though they are at all times interspersed with those of other groups, is superior on two counts. It is broader, in that it examines all sorts of demographic and socio-economic factors in addition to the purely political ones, and it is more profound, in that it studies each of these variables in depth under controlled and comparative circumstances.

In demographic terms, Greeley shows us that Jews score at, or near, the top educationally and financially, followed by German and Irish Catholics. Unlike their closest competitors, however, the Jewish sample is more stable in its high economic and educational attainments. Jews have been far above the norm under controlled circumstances for the past two decades and the net change during this period has been slight and upward.

Within the family, Jewish children tend to be distant from both of their parents, though Jewish males are somewhat closer to their mothers than are Jewish females. The latter appear to be quite independent, assured of their attractiveness to males and opposed to the traditional role of the woman as housewife, as was pointed out above.

Finally, Greeley spends much time on the political perspectives of the various ethnic groups and much relevant data emerges here referring

to Jewish respondents. Rather than concentrating upon voting data, the author is far more concerned with those factors that create the context for the vote. He dwells particularly upon those that relate to political participation, attitudes and that elusive factor known as political "style."

It is interesting to note that while Jews score high on tests of political participation, they score lower than do the Irish Catholics and Scandinavian Protestants. Somewhat surprisingly, Jewish voters are less likely to vote in either presidential or Congressional elections than are Polish and Slavic Catholics or Scandinavian Protestants. They are one-third as likely to belong to a civic or communal group as are Irish Catholics and less likely to write to a political representative than most Protestants and Irish Catholics.

Though Jews emerge as a highly active group in the political arena, they seem to lag behind other groups, not necessarily known for their political involvement, in several areas of concern. Greeley uses these idiosyncracies to develop a model of Jewish political style, i.e., the manner in which Jews most comfortably participate in politics and—more significantly—the means by which they may be most likely attracted as a group. He does so by relating Jewish responses on the several measures of political participation with their various reactions to several of the fundamentals of a political campaign, e.g., partisan affiliations, certain political attitudes, concepts of self-interest, etc.

His findings are intriguing. He decides that, of the many variables tested in relation to political participation, generally, and the vote specifically, the most important single factor is the extent to which the Jewish voter is psychologically involved in the election. This means the frequency with which politics is discussed and what areas of public concern are uppermost in the mind of the voter. A secondary influence is the degree to which the Jewish voter feels that his vote will contribute significantly to the general welfare of the community—the secular community, not his own parochial one.

If Greeley's data is correct, then what has been argued by Banfield and Wilson, and Moynihan and Glazer apparently still holds true. Aside from being generally liberal and politically active, there is a specific way in which Jews are attracted to political candidates, and make their electoral decisions relate to their perspective of the community. They must be given a sense of the "public nature" of the candidate's appeal and will be offended by many directly ethnic, sectarian approaches. They must have a sense of participation and direct psychological involvement and, if this feeling is absent, it must be induced by the particular candidate.

This generalized perspective and its manifestation in terms of active political interest and psychological involvement leads to an interesting

inference. For better or for worse, ethnicity for Jews seems to have a different connotation than it does for other ethnic groups. If the data are reliable—and there is no reason to believe they are not, previous objections notwithstanding—then being ethnically Jewish may mean being non-Ethnic. If ethnic political activity implies voting for fellow ethnics, for Jews it means voting for liberals. If ethnic political participation means “club-house” politics and its social fellowships, for Jews it means the general welfare of the community. If ethnic political style means seeking the best representation for one’s own community, for Jews it means a highly personal psychological involvement in the issues and debates of the campaign. While ethnicity seems to denote a social-cultural set of variables in its manifestation for other groups, for Jews it seems to denote a set of ethics and an ideology. It may, therefore, be a misnomer to term Jewish activity “ethnic” and it may be a logical fallacy to study it in the same way as one studies other “ethnicities.”

In sum, both the Levey-Kramer and Greeley texts make significant statements regarding the role of ethnic groups in critical areas of American social life. Of the two, the Levey-Kramer work is far more readable. It is, however, much narrower in its concern only for ethnic manifestations in the electoral arena and in its indifference to important theoretical and structural considerations. Greeley’s work is more typically detailed and precise in both its presentation and the conceptualization which underlies it. His area of concern encompasses the broad scope of sociological data and his scholarly bent reflects at least a sensitivity to many of the theoretical issues that have been raised therein.

The Current Israeli Literary Scene

Escape Into Siege. By LEON I. YUDKIN. The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization. Routledge and Kegan Paul, London and Boston. 1974.

Reviewed by WARREN BARGAD

SINCE CURRENT Israeli literature and Hebrew criticism are, by and large, linguistically inaccessible to the Western reader, any volume which presents aspects of these fields in English is surely welcome. Leon Yudkin's study introduces many writers and poets who would otherwise certainly escape notice altogether outside small literary circles and a few university departments of Judaica in this country. There are, however, several problems reflected in the attempt to present a broad survey of this literature. While the novice may profit some, he may also feel unduly spoon fed; and those already versed in some of the basics may come away unsated.

Escape into Siege is clearly meant for the interested layman, not for the serious researcher or literary scholar. Subtitled "A Survey of Israeli Literature Today," the work is actually a collection of a dozen articles of varying length and subject matter: one chapter is devoted to Bialik, two to Agnon; one each to S. Yizhar, Aharon Appelfeld, and the Holocaust in Israeli literature; two to Israeli poetry, from Amir Gilboa to David Avidan; and four to various themes and writers in contemporary Israeli prose since 1948. Because the book is, indeed, a collection of discrete articles, its focus is generally too diffuse to be called a genuine survey. It is also too cursory to be labeled a critical introduction to Israeli literature,

and it is somewhat too inclusive to claim a clear contemporariness. Beyond these faults in format, two problems predominate: the unsound method of literary history and the perfunctory manner of interpretation.

While Yudkin disclaims any "pretence . . . that this [volume] is a total representation" of Israeli literature, he does indeed state that "the aim of this work is both to introduce the Israeli literary scene to the public and also to offer a critical examination of it." In the first chapter, "Backgrounds and Perspectives," the author attempts to come to grips with the necessary definitions involved in such a critical study. He poses legitimate, knotty questions: When and with whom does "Israeli literature" begin? What is its relationship to the tradition of "Modern Hebrew Literature"? His answers, however, are less than conclusive. Instead of following his stated train of thought—that Israeli literature is, indeed, "the outcome and continuation" of Modern Hebrew Literature, and that even in a discussion of literary history, the "categories should be primarily literary"—Yudkin is unnecessarily sidetracked: he invokes a long list of stock theories (and theorists) on the birth and development of Modern Hebrew Literature since the early eighteenth century, theories which, for the most part, point to "secularism" as the key ingredient of the literature's "modernity." In this historiographical context, Yudkin's focus turns noticeably away from literary concerns toward a much broader framework of modern Jewish cultural history, and becomes bogged down in a confusing array of overlapping conceptual dimensions: literary, historical, cultural, and ideological. The confusion—

especially the lack of a clear definition of "literary" categories—leads to an increasingly muddled exposition and to some incorrect theorems regarding contemporary Israeli literature.

That . . . estrangement from the tradition [noted in Yudkin's brief survey of turn-of-the-century Hebrew literature] has on the whole characterized Israeli literature is a commonplace. There may be a doubt as to whether the writer is conscious of the break and whether it is meaningful to him, or whether it is by now so taken for granted that it has passed into his unconscious and is no longer a living concern for him. But if the terminology is legitimate, it is generally agreed that the Israeli writer writes out of a condition of secularism and within a secular context. (pp. 13–14)

Despite the rather facile assertion here, it is not at all so evident that "estrangement from the tradition" is a basic or even a general distinguishing feature of Israeli literature. In fact, neither "the tradition" nor the "estrangement" from it has characterized Israeli literature (since 1940, say) at all. (I use "tradition" in the sense of a body of religio-ethnic or partly ethnic beliefs, practices, and generally accepted patterns of behavior.) So-called "secularism" has been a fact of Jewish life since the Enlightenment. Why, then, is it evoked as a central and perhaps definitive component of Israeli literature today? And if such a secularist estrangement is so evident in the literature, how is it that the writers themselves could be so unconscious of it? And *which* Israeli writers and works?

The main fault inherent in Yudkin's thinking is his identifying Israeli literature with that multifaceted sociological entity called Israel; his critique relates far less to literature than it does to broadly

conceived, changing socio-historical circumstances. Since the state of Israel itself is deemed a "revolution" in modern Jewish life, so this line of thinking goes—and here Yudkin follows the lead of the late Israeli critic, Baruch Kurzweil—its literature manifestly reflects a break with the past. The argument, really a kind of trumped up anti-Nietzschean charge, is inherently fallacious; it is all the more troubling, however, since Israeli literature is cast *in toto* into the alleged role of an "ideological rejection of the two-thousand-year experience of diaspora." Instead of supplying answers to the very questions he raises, Yudkin merely echoes aspects of the Kurzweilian thesis and demonstrates very well that his definitions and concerns go far beyond the literary.

Is Modern Hebrew Literature and for that matter, modern Jewish history, a continuation of the past or a rupture with it? And if Israeli literature (and life) is indeed the logical outcome of the last two centuries of Jewish history, then it, too, is implicated in the question. Because we want to know whether Israeli literature too belongs to the corporate whole of Hebrew literature, or whether it is a radical departure that has jettisoned, perhaps necessarily jettisoned, the past. This is a dispute which is very much alive, and could be the burning issue within Israel. Because if Israel has no natural links with the Jewish past or with the present diaspora, then it is fulfilling a very different function from the one expected. (pp. 8f.)

An intrinsic, comprehensive view of Israeli prose and poetry in the last 30–35 years shows that what does characterize Israeli literature is a multiplicity of topics, genres, perspectives, and styles: intermittent war and peace, and their social and psychological ramifications; the

kibbutz and the city apartment dwelling; the demise of idealism and the pitfalls of heroism; the absurd and the lyrical; the politically motivated and the comically rendered. To present a cogent survey of these and other factors in the world of Israeli literature means, first of all, deciding what is literary and what is not, deciding whether one is writing a history of Jewish civilization in modern times, a history of the State of Israel, or a history of Israeli literature. Once one focuses on the literature itself, one may then be better equipped to describe its "meaningful" and "conscious" concerns.

Beyond these questions of proper criteria, Yudkin's apparent inconsistencies are also quite annoying. Israeli literature is seen as being "the outcome and continuation" of the line of tradition within Modern Hebrew Literature; yet the question arises as to "whether it is a radical departure that has jettisoned . . . the past." And while he notes that "the establishment of independence in 1948 did not materially affect the situation"—i.e., did not suddenly alter an already "secular context" of life in a quasi-political framework under the Mandate—Yudkin still persists in his perception of Israeli writers as "often describing a society without patent roots or connections. . . . Language, history and geography were all a new Israeli experience." Because of his overlapping parameters of civilization and literature, Yudkin confuses and leaves unclarified the issues of historical continuity and change.

Perhaps a more proper and helpful method of defining these extrinsic matters is to follow the lead of H. N. Shapira (1895-1943), one of Modern Hebrew Literature's major, though often overlooked, historians. His approach (in *Tol-*

dot ha-Sifrut ha-Ivrit ha-Hadashah 1939) was to delineate the historical boundaries of Modern Hebrew Literature through shifting sets of geographic centers and sub-centers. Thus, Israel, in growing force since the 1930's, has become the undisputed contemporary center of Hebrew culture (but not necessarily of Jewish life—a complex issue which is, at least, debatable). While change is a given in this system of shifting centers, so is continuity. Centers change, but the Hebrew cultural tradition and Jewish life as well are continuous. Israeli literature, because it rises out of a different locale and a different time, naturally focuses on different life styles and concerns, indeed on an entirely different society. But that is not to say that time plus concomitant change equals revolution or estrangement from the past.

The sense of history reflected in *Escape into Siege* is one which is overburdened with sentimental value judgments. His view of literature narrowed by a broad but ultimately obscuring vision of cultural history, Yudkin seems to see the forest, at least a blurred outline of it, but not the trees. Israeli literature, however, should not be judged monolithically as the embodiment of some alleged estrangement from a society that its writers never knew. Instead, it should be analyzed and evaluated from the point of view of its own *inherent* strengths and weaknesses. Yudkin spends an inordinate amount of space seeking a historical context for Israeli literature and not enough space confronting the actual works which constitute that literature.

The chapter on S. Yizhar—the father, one might say, of Israeli fiction—is a case in point of how Yudkin's *geistesgeschichtliche* value

judgments actually work to obscure his literary vision. In a rather forced transitional section from Bialik and Agnon ("their influence has been profound and seminal") to Yizhar, Yudkin sets the critical tone.

In their [Bialik's and Agnon's] writing, we hear an echo of the old world in the new, perhaps a death knell, perhaps a mourning chant, perhaps an objectified account of the transition. And we know, or sense, that Jewish existence will never be the same again. . . . The writers of this period provide the bridges for the literature of the new generation, whose context is so very different. Israel is, after all, quite a different sort of place from Russia, and Israeli Jewish life seems to share very little with the life of the *stetl* [*sic*]. (pp. 71-72)

The sentimentalism expressed here seems to move Yudkin in the direction of a misleading description of Yizhar and his place in the world of Israeli letters. To delineate Yizhar, as Yudkin does, as "the archetypal representative of the new Sabra literature" is not at all improper, if somewhat overstated; but to label Yizhar, further, as "a faithful exponent of the new Israelism" is really uncalled for. The epithet, which casts Yizhar in a quasi-ideological or political mold, far removed from an imaginative, artistic realm, merely reflects Yudkin's own stilted definitions. From the very outset Yizhar is predefined in terms of a hypothetical identity of alienation, a questionable view that is left totally unsubstantiated in the subsequent discussion of his writings.

. . . in this tightly circumscribed circle of identification with the group [the *hevrah*], he [Yizhar or his hero] also establishes a separateness from other groups. And within the context of the world that he sets up, that separateness is, *some-*

times explicitly but always implicitly, from that other world of Jewry that comes from the outside into Palestine, with the old history and strange problems. . . . We do, however, sense in this effort to establish an identity of the land, the local landscape, the new language and even the intruding society (that is of Jewish Palestine) *an alienation from Jewish history and traditional Jewish identification* that has thrust him in this strange and paradoxical situation. *Being an Israeli, without being a Jew first is a difficult experience for the man of conscience.* [my emphases—W.B.] (p. 76)

The analysis which follows—basically a thematic discussion of the well-known 1949 story, "*ha-Shavuy*" ("The Prisoner" or "The Captive"), and some inconclusive remarks on Yizhar's stylistics and purported "weaknesses"—demonstrates that Yudkin is more comfortable with generalized commentary and with summary than he is with close textual explication.

In the subsequent chapters on Israeli prose and poetry, another problem of which the reader is mindful continually is that the author's own critical perspectives remain unclear. In both the interpretation and the evaluation of particular authors and works—the lapse is actually more glaring in the chapters on Bialik and Agnon and less so in those on the Israeli writers—Yudkin cites several critics and paraphrases others (often without making the proper references); but he consistently leaves the reader with a number of critical impressions rather than with a well-focused, cogent opinion. The technical vocabulary employed here hardly goes beyond "first-person" or "third-person" narrator; the author depends altogether too much on rather perfunctory summaries of novelistic plotline; and his comments, often based upon a misinterpretation of narrative details,

are much too succinct and superficial to be truly instructive.

In general, *Escape into Siege* never overcomes the sense of its being a collection of cursory, disparate, and, in some instances, repetitious magazine articles. Often exhibiting substantial lacks in clarity and consistency, the volume is weakest in the two areas of its central endeavor: its muddled, culturally overweighted approach to literary history, and its all too curt and sometimes inaccurate interpretations of individual contemporary works.

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The Beginning of Re-evaluation

Destruction and Survival. By CHARLES W. STECKEL. Delmar Publishing Co., Inc. Los Angeles, 1973. 179 pp.

Reviewed by DAVID ARONSON

THIS BOOK CONSISTS of three major parts. The first, entitled "From Spain to Bosnia," is a brief history of the Jewish communities in Yugoslavia and their destruction in the Holocaust. As rabbi in Osijek, Dr. Steckel was an eye-witness to the persecution and gradual liquidation of his, and the other, communities in the country. He mentions two facts not generally known. There was the brutal part played by the Moslems in Croatia, incited by the frequent visits of the former Grand Mufti of Jerusalem who made his headquarters in Berlin. After the collapse of Mussolini's Government, there were still about 2,500 Jews alive in Croatia in May of 1943, who were massacred by the two White Russian di-

visions sent in there by the Germans with whom these White Russians cooperated. There is an interesting chapter on Tito's partisans, and a comment on Tito's contradictory attitudes towards the Jews in his own country and the State of Israel respectively.

Part II consists of 21 historic letters. The Jews in Yugoslavia, as elsewhere, had at first no conception of what awaited them at the hands of the Nazis and their disciples in the occupied countries. The Nazis were masters at spreading and fostering illusions among their victims. These letters, signed by the two judges whom the authorities appointed as commissioners of the Sephardic and Ashkenazic communities in Sarajevo, were written during the last two months of 1941, during the initial stage of the rounding up and transportation of the Jews. The communications give us a first-hand insight into the naive faith of the Jews, and their belief that the authorities cared about the health or survival of the internees. What sane mind could imagine the Nazi plan for "The Final Solution?"

It is in Part III, "Destruction and Survival," which Steckel has taken as the title of the whole book, that we see his motivation, almost compulsion, to write the book. He does not deal with the tragic details of the destruction; though his mother, brother, sisters and other members of the family perished in the Holocaust, only he and his wife survived. Neither does he discuss the fate of the survivors. Others have done that. What he wants to share with the reader is a search for understanding the faith of the survivors and the question of the meaning and purpose of Jewish existence everywhere. There is a vital need for a full knowledge of the real facts of the Holocaust, the author warns us,

vital not only for the Jewish people, but for the world, for the survival of all human values.

When the Russians overran the concentration camps in Poland, (we are reminded) they found enough Zyklon B to gas 20 million people. It indicates that the Nazis had plans to gas non-Germanic people as well, not only Jews. After all there were only 3 million Jews left in Europe. The chilling reality is that the Germans meant what they preached. The rest of humanity did not comprehend, or did not want to understand what was happening.

How did it happen? How could it happen? What is the full story? "Three decades after World War II," Steckel maintains, "we are still far from being able to understand the perpetrators and the victims of the greatest horror ever committed. . . . Hindsight wisdom, reckless generalities and oversimplification, will not change the realities of the Holocaust." While research is going on and new data and ideas are being published, the author feels strongly that it is time for a re-examination of the Holocaust literature, especially in these four aspects: historiography, the psycho-philosophical thought, the religious-theological aspect and the imagina-

tive literature. In Part III of the book, the author presents a thoughtful beginning of this needed process of re-evaluation.

In this re-evaluation, Steckel affirms his faith in survival, not only the survival of the Jewish people, but the survival of humanity, the survival of the values which give meaning to human life. He points to acts of kindness and spiritual heroism under circumstances which prove that man and nature can rise up to God, even in time of crisis. He calls attention to the fact that the question of "God is dead" was raised by American rabbis and not by survivors of the Holocaust. The rebellion of the survivors was against society, against a socio-political system, and the author has faith that man will gradually learn how to discipline himself and organize his society in ways which will lead to justice and peace.

Dr. Steckel calls for a new dimension in the study of the Holocaust and its lessons. The reader will find his arguments challenging and worthwhile.

DAVID ARONSON is *rabbi-emeritus* of Beth El Synagogue, Minneapolis and professor of rabbinics at the U. of Judaism, Los Angeles.

"The History of Israel and Biblical Faith"

A SPECIAL ISSUE HONORING JOHN BRIGHT

John Bright, the distinguished Cyrus H. McCormick Professor of Hebrew and Interpretation at Union Theological Seminary in Virginia, retired in June of 1975.

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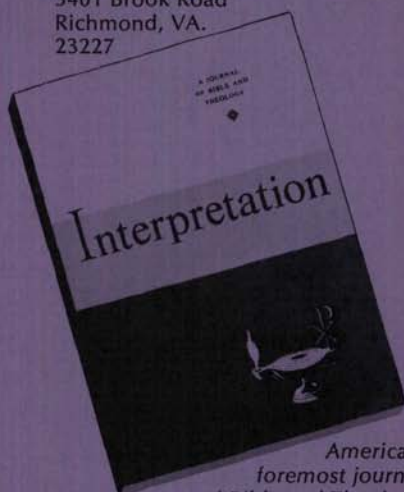
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